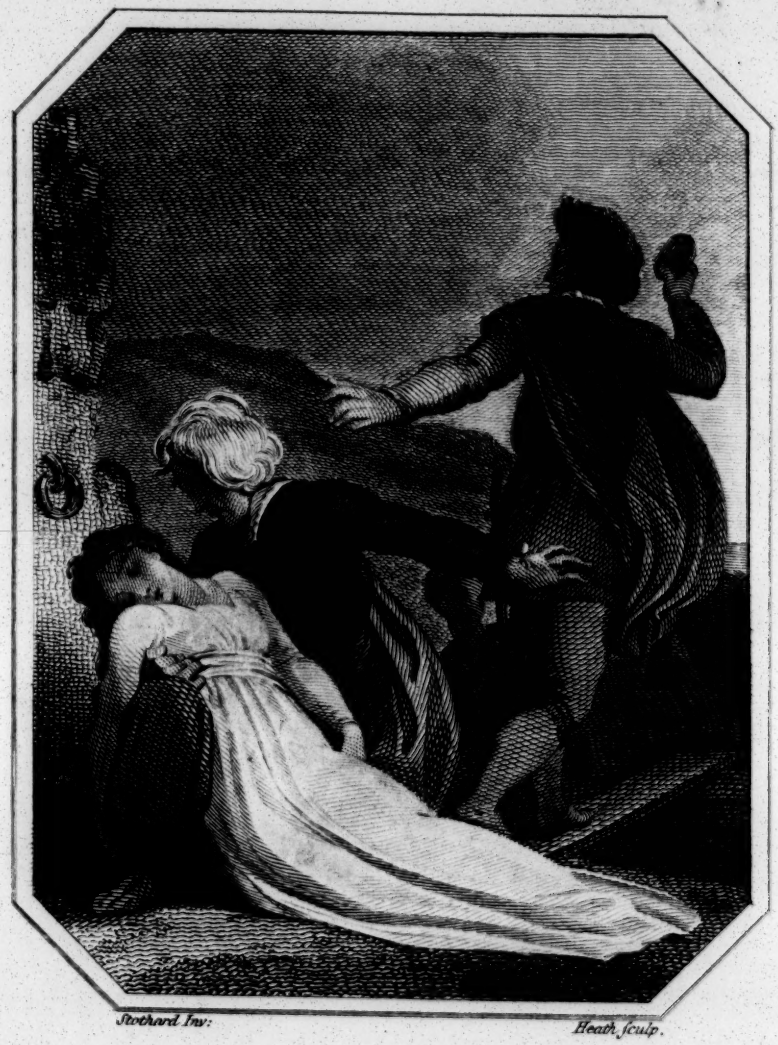

Stothard Inv:

Heath. sculp.

Count Benyowsky.

Act V. Scene last.

Published June 2 1800 by Vernor & Hood Poultry.

COUNT BENYOWSKY;

OR,

The Conſpiracy of Kamtſchatka.

A

DRAMA,

IN FIVE ACTS.

Tranſlated from the German of

AUGUSTUS VON KOTZEBUE,

BY

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Dramatis Personae.

GOVERNOR *of Kamtschatka.*
IWAN FEDROWITSCH, *Captain of Cossacks.*
COUNT BENYOWSKY
CRUSTIEW - - - - - -
STEPANOFF - - - - -
KUDRIN - - - - - - -
BATURIN - - - - - - -
WASILI - - - - - - - -
} *Exiles.*
TSCHULOSNIKOFF, *Master of a Vessel.*
GRIGORI, *his Nephew.*
KULOSSOW, *a Russian Lieutenant.*
KASARINOFF, *a Merchant.*
CORPORAL.

ATHANASIA, *the* Governor's *Daughter.*
THEODORA, *her Attendant.*

Exiles, Soldiers, Servants, Children.

COUNT BENYOWSKY.

ACT I.

SCENE, *one of the* GOVERNOR'S *Apartments in the Citadel of* BOLCHERESK. *The* GOVERNOR *and* IWAN *sit on one Side with a Chess-board before them, paying great Attention to the Game. On the other Side sits* ATHANASIA *with a Book in her Hand, and near her* THEODORA *working Embroidery.*

Iwan. CHECK to the king!

Gov. Indeed! And by a pawn, too? That's provoking enough.

Iwan. Yes, yes, these pawns, these common fellows, he who can manage them———

Gov. Is a match for a king? True.

Athan.—(Throwing the book aside.)—Oh!

Theo. You sigh!

Athan. Why was I born exactly at this place?

Theo. I care little where I was born, if I but live.

Athan. And do you live!

Theo. What a droll question! I think I prove that at my meals.

Athan. Yes, every one can eat.

Theo. Except the dead. A creature that eats, is a living creature.

Athan. You are satisfied with the torpid life of an oyster.

Theo. Oh, if wishes were but magic wands!

Athan. What are you doing?

Theo. I am embroidering flowers.

Athan. Where do these flowers grow? Not here. What a delightful country is Italy! I have just been reading a description of it. There orange groves flourish through the country; here we are obliged to work them in tapestry. There nature is a healthy youth; here an infirm old man. The inhabitants of that happy land may say they live.

Theo. I grant they have what we wish for; but, in return, they want what we possess. Our soil produces other plants and other pleasures.

Gov. Zounds! my knight is lost.

Iwan. And my queen saved.

Athan. Pleasures, say you? Every house is a prison. Wrapt in warm furs up to the very chin, we shrink from the fresh air, and hungry dogs drag our sledges through eternal snow. No flower unfolds itself in our cold climate, and no fruit ripens. Is such your idea of enjoyment?

Theo. What care I for flowers and fruit, as long as I have men?

Athan. Men! Alas! What kind of men? Do they deserve the name of human beings? "To-morrow," say they, "is a holiday. To-morrow we will be merry." And how do they shew their mirth? The Russian intoxicates himself with brandy; the Kamtschadale with the juice of poisonous plants. Then they stagger through

the streets, and the very dogs they meet turn away. This is their mirth; this is their enjoyment of life.

Theo. But don't we sometimes seat ourselves in a circle, and sing a cheerful air to the Balalaika? Is there no pleasure in that?

Iwan. Check to the queen!

Gov. I don't like the situation of my game.

Athan.—*(Fixing her eyes on the earth.)*—No, my friend. To my heart it affords no pleasure. Were my good mother still alive——

Theo. Have you any secret lodged in your bosom?

Athan. Oh, no. We eat, drink, and sleep. Who makes any secret of these things? Of any other, no one is in want here.

Theo. So much the better for us.

Athan. Genius and feeling do not ripen in this freezing climate; nay, scarcely bud. To estimate the value of a sable's skin, to calculate the profits of a voyage from this country to the Aleutian and Curilian Islands, is all the knowledge our rude countrymen possess. A successful bargain is their only pleasure. Other nations enjoy the delights of *love* and *wine*, but these barbarians seek enjoyment in *sensuality* and *brandy*. Even the sweet sensation of humanity is unknown to them, because it is warm to the *heart*, not to the *palate*. Wherever I direct my eyes or steps, I encounter miserable exiles. Sorrow appears in every eye, and penury on every cheek. On every side I see a muster-roll of human distress. No sun-beams melt our snow; it is consumed by tears for ever dropping on it.

Theo. This discontent arises from your never-ceasing studies. Your father should order all the books to be thrown into the great stove which warms the guard-room.

Athan. He may burn the books, but their contents are written in my heart.

Theo. Perhaps I am wrong. Your discontent may arise from another cause. You have reached the age at which a female suspects every thing, and comprehends nothing. When in possession of one thing, you want every thing; and if every thing were to be granted, you would still want something. To a heart which feels a void, the world is a desert. To a contented heart, Kamtschatka is a paradise.

Athan. You are right, Theodora. I am a solitary being in the world: and when my father too shall leave me—he is old and infirm—when he too shall forsake me—alas! what will become of me?

Iwan.—*(Takes a bishop.)*—This bishop I have long had a design upon.

Gov. He guarded my king.

Iwan. Now for it!

Gov. I see no means of escaping.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Lieutenant Kulossow is arrived with several exiles, and waits your Excellency's pleasure in the anti-chamber.

Gov. Conduct him and the exiles hither.

[*Exit* Servant.

Athan. Another group of wretched beings. Come, Theodora. I do not like to see them. [*Going.*

Enter KULOSSOW, *preceding* BENYOWSKY, *and a number of Exiles. All stand at the entrance of the apartment.*

Athan.—*(Starts, attempts to leave the room, but turns again, gazes at* Benyowsky, *becomes embarrassed, and seats herself again.)*—Theodora—let us go.

Theo. I am ready.

Athan.—*(Looking with reserve at* Benyowsky.*)*—Do you see that man?

Theo. I see many men.

Athan. But you surely can distinguish him I mean. There is a boldness in his eye, which seems to bear him up against his wretched fate.

Theo. I see a man whose sallow cheeks betray sickness and want.

Athan. True, but health of soul beams from his eyes. See, with what boldness he looks round, while his companions fix their eyes upon the earth. He seems to say, I am every where free. A noble spirit considers chains and the riband of an order in the same light. His look makes me tremble.

Theo. Shall we go?

Athan. Why should we go? To make ourselves familiar with misfortune, is to provide a treasure for futurity.

Theo. Well! we will stay then.

[*Begins to work again.*

(Benyowsky *approaches, stops behind the* Governor's *chair, and observes the game.*)

Athan. See! He is as much at ease as if he were in his own house.

Theo.—*(Looking up.)*—It will be well for him, if your father should put so favourable a construction on his boldness as you do.

Athan. That he will. A lofty spirit in adversity must gain the heart of every one.

Gov.—*(Rising.)*—I have lost the game.

Iwan. Yes—you have.

Ben. Not exactly.

Gov.—*(Looks up with astonishment, surveys him keenly, and measures him from head to foot.)*—Who are you?

Ben. A soldier. I have been a general—I am now a slave.

Gov. Do you understand chess?

Ben. A little.

Gov. Do you think it possible that my game can be recovered?

Ben. Perhaps it may.

Gov. Try then.—(*To* Iwan.)—With your permission.

Iwan. By all means, if you wish it; but there is no chance of escape. In four moves I shall check-mate you. [Benyowsky *and* Iwan *begin to play.*

Gov.—*(To* Kulossow.)—Your report.

Kul. Here it is.

Gov.—*(After having hastily perused it, apart to the officer.)*—Do you know any thing respecting this man?

Kul. He was the general of the Polish confederates, and was made a prisoner, after being severely wounded.

Gov. What is his name?

Kul. Count Benyowsky.

Ben. Check to the king and queen!

Iwan. Damnation!

Gov.—*(To* Kulossow.)—Have you had a dangerous voyage?

Kul. Extremely dangerous. On our passage from Ochozk hither, we were overtaken by a dreadful storm. Our mainmast was carried away by the board, and shattered the captain's arm. His great pain made him incapable of attending to the vessel, and Count Benyowsky undertook to supply his place. Most skilfully he did it. To his dexterity and resolution we are obliged for our escape.

Ben. Check mate!

Iwan.—(*Overturns the board peevishly.*)—You deal with the devil!

Ben.—(*Smiling.*)—Success, united with a little prudence, has before been dignified with that accusation.

Iwan. I am proverbially prudent. When I use the term *prudent*, I mean to imply, Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks, the second person in this province. Here is the money I have lost.

[*Throws several bank-notes upon the table.*

Gov. It seems, Count, you are as skilful a chess-player as a mariner. You have lately saved a half-lost vessel, and now a half-lost game. The latter only concerns myself. For the former I return you thanks in the name of the Empress.

Ben.—(*Bowing with great dignity.*)—Those whom I rescued from destruction have already thanked me.

Gov. Let his chains be taken off.—(*He is obeyed.*)—Your conduct has in one minute procured you what you could not otherwise have acquired for many years—my respect. You might have made yourself master of the vessel during the storm. You might have fled to some remote part of the world.

Ben. I might have done more: I had it in my power to let the vessel sink. But you perceive I had the courage to preserve my life.

Athan. Oh, Theodora! what a man!

Gov. In whatever respect my duty to my sovereign will allow me to shew you marks of my esteem, and to alleviate the severity of your fate, I will do it most readily.

Ben. I envy you, Sir, the pleasing prerogative of exercising generosity towards the wretched, and I feel a regard for you, because you know how to use it.

Gov. At present my duty commands me to prescribe your future mode of life.

Ben. The man who knew how to command, will know how to obey.

Gov. Obedience and peaceable demeanour are first required of you.

Ben. Those are easy to a slave.

Gov. You are at liberty, and will be supplied with provisions for three days; after which you must provide for your own support. Each exile will receive a gun, a lance, powder and ball. The chace will be, in future, your sole employment.

Ben.—(With ardour and delight.)—The chace and arms! Transporting occupation! It will remind me of war and liberty.

Gov. You must annually deliver to me, as a tribute to the crown, the skins of six sables, fifty rabbits, two foxes, and two ermines. Not far from the town a place will be allotted to you, where you must build houses for yourselves, and each will be supplied with furniture from the magazine.

Ben. Your Excellency is most kind. While you assign to us our labour, you console us.

Gov. I shall enter into an alliance with time and custom, to smooth the rugged path on which it is your destiny to wander. Meanwhile, farewell!

Ben. Your Empress is a great woman. She has placed a humane governor where humanity was most necessary. I go to shew my companions, by my example, how they should endure misfortune. [*Exit with the Exiles.*

Gov.—(Looking after him.)—That is a great man.

Iwan. A great chess-player, you mean.

Athan. What a noble youth!

Iwan. How rapidly he played! Move upon move!

Gov. With what dignity he bears misfortune!

Iwan. My game was so favourable.

Athan. What noble pride, yet what easy manners!

Iwan. Check to the king and queen! I shall never forget that while I live.

Gov. Willingly will I alleviate his fate, whenever I can and dare.

Athan. Suppose, my dear father, you were not to insist upon his attention to the chace during these cold days, and were, instead of it———

Gov. Well! What instead of it?

Athan. I have long felt a wish to be instructed in French and music. You, too, have sometimes said you wished it—Perhaps——

Gov. Perhaps what?

Athan. The Count could instruct me.

Gov. If he understands them.

Athan.—(*With eagerness.*)—Oh! I am sure he does.

Theo.—(*Aside.*)—Ay, ay, no doubt.

Gov. We will see. Come, friend, breakfast is ready.

[*Exit.*

Iwan.—(*As he follows the* Governor.)—Check to the king and queen! It is enough to make a man distracted.

[*Exit.*

Theo.—(*Putting her embroidery into a work-bag.*)—Shall we go to breakfast?

Athan.—(*Lost in meditation, and scarcely hearing* Theodora's *question.*)—Directly.

Theo.—(*After a pause.*)—Your father will expect you to pour out the tea.

Athan. Do you think so?

Theo.—(*After another pause.*)—It will be necessary, too, to fetch some sugar from the cupboard.

Athan.—(*Starting, as if from a dream.*)—What say you? Yes—No—You are wrong.

Theo.—(*Laughing.*)—In what respect?

Athan. In what respect!—(*Sinks again into a reverie.*)—Oh!

Theo. I am hungry.

Athan. Hungry! How can you be hungry now?

Theo.—(*Laughing.*)—Because I have had nothing to eat to-day.—(Athanasia *makes no reply, but rivets her eyes upon the floor, while her features betray what is passing in her mind.*)—Athanasia!—(*Aside.*)—How can I dispel these whims?

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. His Excellency requests that Miss Athanasia—

Athan.—(*Awaking.*)—Oh! The French master! I'll come directly. [*Exit.*

Theo. The French master! Ha! Ha! I comprehend all this. [*Exit.*

SCENE *changes to the Village, where the Exiles dwell.*

Enter CRUSTIEW *from his hut.*

Crus. Hail to the morning sun! It is a clear serene winter's day, but—hoo—it is cold. The snow glitters, and crackles. The smoke spires into the air. Small icicles hang to my fur collar, wherever I have chanced to breathe. Oh, my heart, why dost thou alone for ever burn and glow? Old blockhead that I am! My hair is white as the rime which covers these larches, and yet beneath the snow rages a flame like the volcano Kalitowa. Oh, liberty, liberty, thou art, like bread, the requisite of every rank and age. Bread nourishes the body—liberty the soul. Alas! for a single indiscretion

have I been an exile three-and-twenty years. Oh, my wife, my child! Are you alive? Are you in health? Hast thou too already wrinkles on thy forehead, dear Elizabeth? Has sorrow for the loss of thy affectionate husband bleached thy cheek?—(*With romantic convulsive action.*)—See! she puts forth her hand to support her infirm old Crustiew. Give, give me thy hand, Elizabeth. What suffering can be so severe on earth as not to be alleviated by a loving wife? I see thee too, my dear Alexander. How tall thou art grown! Thou wert lying in the cradle when I imprinted my last kiss upon thy toothless mouth, and marked a cross upon thy breast with my chains. There you are sitting together, and Alexander says, "Mother, tell me how my father looked"—and his mother drops a tear upon her needle-work—a tear, in which my image floats. With sorrow she celebrates our wedding-day. She invites remembrance as a guest; and grief too appears, though uninvited.—(*Bursting into a flood of tears.*)—Oh, God, allow me for one of my few remaining moments, allow me to clasp her in my arms, that I may feel there is a being in the world who loves me!

Enter STEPANOFF *with a gun in his hand, and a fox as well as a couple of rabbits on his back.*

Step. Good day to you, old Crustiew! To-day the sun itself will congeal to a sheet of ice. There he stands in the firmament, as if he had been painted and placed there by some miserable dauber, so totally devoid is he of power and warmth.

Crus. Yet you went out early.

Step. I did, and have killed what you see—a fox and a couple of rabbits. In another hour they would have been frozen to death. Feel! They are as hard and stiff

as bones. When I shot them, they scarcely bled. A little red ice dropped from the wound.

Crus. Have you been to town?

Step. I was there last night. A new party of exiles is just arrived.

Crus.—(*Eagerly.*)—Indeed! Shame on me! I have caught myself in the act of giving way to a hateful sensation.

Step. What! One of your usual romantic notions?

Crus. Romantic it is not. Ought I to wish that others may be wretched, because I am so?

Step. Why not? They are companions in misery. There is some little consolation in hearing them complain of hardship, which custom has made tolerable to us.

Crus. Are there many of them?

Step. About twenty. I understand there is a noble Pole among them, a valiant, enterprizing, fearless soldier. That is my man.

Crus. What are you brooding upon?

Step. Upon eggs which you had no concern in laying; upon projects beyond your courage or conception. What kind of life do we lead? Heaven and hell! If you ask me whether I had rather be the hunter, or the hunted fox, I know not how to answer you. I envy the fox, because he steals, and enjoys his booty—because, even in the chace, he listens, as he flies, with anxious hope; whereas no interchange of sensation tells me I am alive.

Crus. Courage without power is like a child who acts the soldier.

Step. Courage without power is a nonentity. Courage is never without power. In short, I will no longer submit to such a life of misery.

Crus. None of us would submit to it, were we not under controul.

Step. Make me your leader, and I will appoint the stranger second in command. In a few days we shall be free.

Crus.—(*Shaking his head.*)—You, Stepanoff! Unite your valour with another's wisdom and experience; then we may perhaps succeed.

Step. How sagacious! Old people must ever be trying to convince us, that the world would perish, if not supported by their sage advice. An old man always wants a clear light, and then walks cautiously and slowly, while the youth needs but a glimpse——he sees——he snatches.

Crus. How long has this wish inhabited you mind? But a few months ago you laughed when others murmured.

Step. And now I am enraged that others *only* murmur.

Crus. Whence this sudden alteration?

Step. Hear me, old man, and comprehend me, if you can. To warm myself at an oven, or in the sun, to be drawn by horses or by dogs, to eat sterlet or dried fish, was hitherto a matter of indifference to me, and will remain so, if the girl I love will but partake of them.

Crus. The girl you love!

Step. Why, yes. Is it so wonderful that I should be in love?

Crus. Are you beloved in return?

Step. Who would ask such a question? When you wish to purchase a woman's heart, you must not spend much time in cheapening it. Pretend you do not care much for the article, and you will obtain it at a low rate.

Crus. Who is the girl whom you admire?

Step. Athanasia.

Crus. The Governor's daughter!

Step. Yes. Why do you start?

Crus. Are you mad!

Step. Ha! Ha! Ha! Is the Governor's daughter less a woman than the daughters of other people?

Crus. You are right. I ought to have laughed instead of starting. A prisoner, an exile, who is banished from society, who cannot even call the knife his own which he carries in his pocket, who only enters the castle in which Athanasia lives, when he is obliged to work there as a slave——

Step. This it is which drives me to desperation. When the lovely creature passes me, nay, even touches me with her silken gown, she scarcely ever sees me; and when perchance she does, there is nothing but compassion in her looks. Not even on Easter Sunday, when every Russian may approach and kiss his neighbour, while he says, "Christ is risen from the dead," not even then dare I approach her. But this shall not long continue. What I am able to do I will dare to do.

Crus. Stepanoff, you are drunk earlier than usual to-day.

Step. Ha! Ha! Ha! Old age calls manly spirit drunkenness! Common souls think every great project madness; but when it has succeeded, they crown the achiever with the title of hero.

Enter WASILI, *hastily.*

Wasili. Some new exiles are arrived, and already approach our village.

Step. Thanks to St. George, we shall learn again, at last, how the world goes on—whether men be still fools, and what kind of folly is the present fashion.

Crus. Go, Wasili, and see that a new cask is tapped. Place the bottles and glasses, the caviar and cedar-nuts, upon the table. They are perhaps hungry. Let us try

to beguile them of their sorrow for the first quarter of an hour. [*Exit* Wasili.

Step. That Wasili is an excellent fellow. There are employments in the world which mould a man into a certain form for the term of his whole life. He is like a piece of paper, which, after having been once folded, never loses its marks. Is it not evident, at first sight, that this man has been in service at court? He announces those who arrive, he conducts those who depart, he gathers intelligence wherever he can, he understands how to set out a table, he is as idle as a satiated lap-dog, and his head is like a lady's work-basket.

Crus. Yet in one thing he resembles you. His tongue is sharp.

Step. It is only a cat's tongue. It can lick the skin off, but not wound.

Crus. Here come the strangers.

Enter BENYOWSKY *and the* EXILES.

(Curiosity and joy immediately attract the older inhabitants of the village from their huts, who assemble round the new Exiles.*)*

Welcome among us, ye companions in misery.

Step. Our welcome is like the salutation of hell, when the devil arrives with a fresh stock of souls.

Ben. Participated sufferings lose half their bitterness. I greet you all as my brethren.

Crus. Stranger, give me thy hand.—(*He shakes it.*)—I observe upon this wrist the marks of recent chains. My wrist was once as red as this; but three-and-twenty years erase the impressions both of good and evil.

Ben. How! Have you dwelt on this coast for three-and-twenty years! and are you still alive?

Crus. I am, and I still hope.

Ben. Then is hope the only treasure which increases with misfortune.

Crus. It is a last resource, which we are willing to share with any one, though never entirely to consume.

Step. What is hope without courage?—A broken-winded courser.

Ben. Misfortune excites courage.

Step. Not always. Despair alone excites it—Misfortune droops, and loses the faculties of exertion.

Crus. Let us have no more of this ill-timed prattle! You are in want of refreshment. We have prepared a breakfast; and though we treat you with sorry fare, we do it with willing hearts.

Ben. Tell me—where shall we dwell? Where shall we build our huts?

Crus. The inclemency of the season will not allow you to build as yet. Our huts are open to you; and we will lodge you as well as we are able till the approach of spring. Go, Wasili; fetch the tickets on which our names are written, that I may shake them in my cap, and allot to each stranger his companion. [*Exit* Wasili.

Ben.—(*Apart to* Crustiew.)—Good old man, let me dwell with you.

Crus.—(*The same.*)—You shall.—(*Aloud.*)—Now tell me, friends. Is there no one among you who knows the forsaken wife of Crustiew? She lives, most probably, in Novogorod.—(*Looking anxiously around.*)—Is there no one?

An Exile.—(*Comes forward.*)—I know her.

Crus.—(*Clasping him with great emotion in his arms.*) Oh, my friend, is she alive?

Exile. She is.

Crus. In what way does she live?

Exile. In quiet retirement. I saw her lately at the holy-water feast.

Crus. And my son Alexander?

Exile. He is a soldier, and has gained renown.

Crus. Oh, Almighty God! Perhaps for the first time the thanksgiving of a happy man ascends to thee from Kamtschatka's dreary coast! My friend, may you, for these happy tidings, enjoy what none but Providence can grant—consolation and happiness in slavery.

Re-enter WASILI.

Wasili. Here are the tickets.

Crus.—(*Shakes them in his cap, and selects one unobserved, which he secretly puts into* Benyowsky's *hand.*)—Pretend to have taken this.—(*Aloud.*)—Now, let each stranger draw the name of his future companion.

Step. This is a lottery which contains but very few prizes. The huts are filthy nests, and the inhabitants croaking ravens.

Ben.—(*Appears to draw a ticket from the cap, which he opens and reads.*)—Crustiew!

Crus. You are welcome. We will share our happy recollections, and interchange wishes and hopes.

Ben. I dare engage that you will not lose by the interchange.

First Exile.—(*Draws a ticket and reads it.*)—Stepanoff.

Step. If you can laugh when you have the cholic, I bid you welcome.

Second Exile.—(*Draws.*)—Wasili.

Step. He will tell you how they used to dance in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.

Third Exile.—(*Draws.*)—Alexis.

Step. He was a priest, and will teach you how to pray.

Fourth Exile.—(*Draws.*)—Baturin.

Step. Oh, that fellow can describe to you the dwarf's wedding in the reign of Peter the First.

Fifth Exile.—(*Draws.*)—Heraklius Zadskoy.

Step. That man will drink you under the table, if you have swallowed nothing but proof-spirit all your life.

Sixth Exile—(*Draws.*)—Biatzinin.

Step. He teaches hawks to pounce upon their prey, and catches hares with springes.

Seventh Exile.—(*Draws.*)—Lobtschoff.

Step. He can count how many hairs grow on a sable's back, and how many eggs an ant lays.

Crus. All is now properly arranged. Let us, therefore, go to breakfast; that over the full goblet our young friendship may have a rapid growth.

Ben. The full goblet shall make it grow, and its firmness will be established by our common misery.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE, *a wretched Apartment in* CRUSTIEW'S *Hut.* BENYOWSKY *is sitting at a Window with his Head supported on his Hand.*

Ben. At length the morning dawns. At length the sun casts a glance upon Kamtschatka; a glance, cold and comfortless as my wretched fate. Where are you, ye gay visions of my early youth? I am forsaken—left to solitary, gloomy meditation. No voice whispers at the side of my couch, "Hist! He sleeps." No tears will ever drop upon my grave, declaring, "Alas! He is dead." No one hates me—no one loves me—and am I still alive? A knife and a lance, a sword and a gun, have been given to me—and am I still alive? Quick let me break these bonds, and burst from my confinement! My soul is free, and does not own the power of chains. Alas! I am restrained by *Hope*, that daughter of the jailor, who plays the wanton with every prisoner. The dagger drops from my hand, and I sink into her arms. —*(A pause.)*—Fool that I am! I am a child in leading strings. Hope is but a doll, with which children of a larger growth play till they reach the grave, that they may not lament their misfortunes. Begone! Me thou shalt not deceive. I am a man. To what power will my spirit stoop? Who is lord over my existence but the Almighty—and myself?—*(He espies a knife upon the table. With a look of horror and desperation he rivets his eye upon it. Suddenly he stretches forth his hand, and seizes it. Irresolutely he raises his arm to stab himself.*

He gazes alternately at the knife, and towards Heaven. His hand slowly sinks upon his knee. He throws his other arm upon the back of the chair, and rests his head upon it, when a miniature set in diamonds drops from his hair. He starts up alarmed, snatches it, and gazes intently at it. By degrees sorrow glistens in his eyes, and he exclaims,)—Emilia!—My wife!—*(He throws the knife away.)*—Thee have I preserved. Of thee my rapacious foes have not deprived me. In my hair I hid thee—and in my heart. Emilia, the globe lies between us, but God and love know neither space nor time. I will live for thee. For thee I will fight, and defy a host of combatants. This picture shall be my shield, my talisman. When real love inhabits a heart, fear is a stranger, and guilt a cast-off servant. Oh, gentle Hope! return, and associate with thy sister Love. Never part again, sweet enchanting pair. Emilia loves me—my wife loves me—It matters not whether a wall or a quarter of the world divides us. At this very hour she is perhaps praying for my deliverance, while a suckling hangs upon her arm, and lisps the name of father. Live, Benyowsky, live! Thy life belongs to her and him.

Enter CRUSTIEW.

(Benyowsky *hastily conceals the picture.*)

Crus. Good morning, friend, and brother.—*(They shake hands.)*—I ask not how you have slept, for we were only separated by a slight partition. I heard you pacing to and fro, throughout the night, and as I lay, I groaned in unison with you.

Ben. Forgive me, good old man, if I disturbed you. Time and custom will soon teach me how to bear the want of rest myself, without infringing upon your's.

Crus. Sleep is not always rest, and hapless is the wretch whose only rest is sleep. You yesterday mentioned a few words respecting the possibility of escape. You seemed inspired by the hope of a happier futurity. My heart caught the spark, and burst into a flame.

Ben. It is a flame without fuel.

Crus. How! Think you it will be soon extinguished? —*(With solemnity, and in a lower tone.)*—No. For three-and-twenty years, the project has been ripening in my mind. It has ripened slowly, like gold in the bosom of the mountains. Much have I prepared. Much is done, much still remains to be done. Twenty men have sworn fidelity to me. They are well prepared, for they are armed with courage, understanding, experience, and determination. In one respect, and in one only, are we wanting. In none have I found the real spirit of a leader. One man is tickled by ambition. Another, though in slavery, boasts of his birth and rank. A third has no idea of a firm, well-regulated association. A fourth would to-morrow execute the project, and on the succeeding day consider of the means. In short, every one is tolerably adapted for the situation he at present holds, but in no one can I discover the stamp of a truly great spirit. We have abundance of wheels, but no mainspring.

Ben. You yourself———

Crus. I know myself. The boy may become an enterprizing youth, but the greybeard can never act with the energy of man. Let me have time to survey a thing on every side, and my courage often equals my experience. But when sudden dangers surround me like repeated flashes of lightning, when years depend upon a minute —when I must instantly determine thus or thus—then am I overpowered, irresolute, powerless.

Ben. And were you to find the man whom your imagination has depicted, what reliance can he place upon a horde of criminals? They are rash, but not courageous; daring, but not magnanimous. Their resolution is intoxication, and at the decisive moment its effects would fall upon their nerves. Who would be surety for the fidelity of men like these?

Crus. I—and their misery. Shall I describe to you the latter? I will: for, unless you release them from it, your destination is the same.—*(With increasing energy.)* —Believe me, all who dwell here are not criminals. One hasty expression has doomed many a wretch to perish here. Miserable is the criminal—but far more miserable he whom indiscretion only has loaded with the chains of slavery. Bowed to the earth by agony and penitence, he lands on these inhospitable shores, and penury steps forth to welcome him. Countenances, on which justice, and often nature, has stamped the mark of guilt, scowl at his approach. In vain does he seek a friend. In vain does he attempt to recal the pleasing visions of his former days: or, if he can recal them, what do they avail? To him who hopes, they are a cordial: to him who dares not hope, they are a torture. Industry and perseverance but prolong his misery. He is not allowed to possess any property, and every villain may plunder him with impunity. He must patiently endure oppression; for if his spirit, roused by injurious treatment, dare assert the rights of nature, the laws of the great Peter decree that he shall be the prey of dogs. Banished from the reputable part of society, reduced to every slavish and disgusting employment, fed on dried fish, and almost daily doomed to feel the scourge—Oh, what a wretched, wretched picture! Health affords him no delight. When sickness assails him, he is devoid of every consolation: when death overtakes him, he is for-

saken by the world, ere he has left the world. In a dreary desert his last groan dies away, and the dews of death remain upon his clay-cold brow, unwiped by any friend. Days and weeks creep slowly after each other, and the victims of despair perish imperceptibly. Putrefaction alone enforces from tyranny the last favour of being buried in the snow.

Ben. Hold! Thou wouldst murder me by slow poison. Lend me a dagger.

Crus. Many a victim of despair has here plunged the dagger into his own heart—and his executioners have laughed. No one has yet indulged the hope of tasting liberty, without having recourse to the compassion of death or princely power. No one has yet anticipated freedom by means of united prudence, courage and determination. For thee was reserved this glorious anticipation—this glorious achievement—for thee, Count Benyowsky—Hungarian magnate—husband—father—hero!

Ben.—(With ardour.)—I am ready. Speak! What can I do? What dost thou wish that I should do?

Crus. Age has but words—manhood is rich in action.

Ben. Thou hast poured oil enough into my glowing breast. I pant for action. What shall, what can I do?

Crus. Release thyself and us.

Ben. Here is my arm. Lend me thy head.

Crus. Nature has formed thine own to govern. Thou hast no need of my wisdom; but my caution shall ever wait at thy side.

Ben. Yet how is this? As yet I am in the dark. The power of man is united with all-powerful nature in opposition to us. On one side desert wastes, and boundless fields of snow; on the other, unknown seas divide us from the habitable world. Without a ship, without a pilot, without arms, without provisions, how long can

we struggle? If we be free to-day, to-morrow we must die.

Crus. Die and be free! Is not that far preferable to the description I have given of our present situation? The game we play at has every advantage. Much may be gained—life only can be lost.

Ben. Thou art right, old man. Let me examine the interior of thy daring project.—(Crustiew *opens a small closet, takes out a book, and presents it to* Benyowsky, *who opens it, and reads,*)—"Anson's voyage round the world." In what respect will this assist us?

Crus. The name of Anson is the name of a friend. On my arrival the barbarians ransacked all my pockets. My purse, which contained but little, became their booty, as well as several other trifles. I trembled; they laughed at me with exclamations of derision. The blockheads knew not that I trembled for the safety of my books. Three friends have, with fraternal affection, accompanied, and, in some measure, consoled me during my long captivity. These three are *Anson*, *Plato*, and *Plutarch*. To the second I am obliged for my belief in Heaven, for my reliance on a happier futurity. The third has made me acquainted with the heroes of antiquity, and has taught me to feel the energetic dignity of man. To hope—Oh, Benyowsky! to hope—(*pointing to the book*)—The first has taught me—the undaunted, noble Anson!——

Ben. How so?

Crus.—(*With youthful ardour.*)—Flight! Flight to the Marian Islands! The possibility of this Lord Anson has developed. Tinian—an island, which is like a paradise on earth—blessed with a mild climate—harmless inhabitants——wholesome fruits—peace—liberty—contentment—happiness! Oh, Benyowsky! Benyowsky! save thyself and us.

Ben. With astonishment and rapture I look up to thy gigantic mind. Thy hand! I will execute thy great design, or perish in the attempt. With this hand I devote to thee my life. Nothing can release me from my vow, but death or liberty. Embrace me as Misery and Despair embrace each other—embrace me as thy brother.

Crus. Pardon me. You are our leader.—*(He kneels.)* —I swear to you submission and fidelity.

Ben.—*(Sinking upon his neck.)*—I will reward this confidence—I will conquer or die. But if I fall, by him who made me, thou shalt quake, Kamtschatka!

Crus. Enough! Our brethren in misfortune, and in this union, are waiting for my signal.—*(He goes to the door, and several times pulls a rope suspended from above, on which a bell is heard.)*

Ben. What are you doing?

Crus. Come to the window. See! They crowd hither from all sides.

Ben.—*(Looking out.)*—Transporting sight! Thus does the wretch, whose vessel is about to shiver on the rock, gaze at his deliverers approaching from the shore.

Enter STEPANOFF, KUDRIN, BATURIN, *and many other Exiles. Mutual salutations are exchanged, and hands shaken on every side. The assembly then forms a semicircle, in the centre of which stand* CRUSTIEW *and* BENYOWSKY.

Crus. Friends, and fellow-sufferers! You have for several years chosen my maturer age to be your guide upon the path where thorns are plentifully scattered, and the rose is not allowed to blossom. You have been satisfied with me in all respects, except my tardy circumspection. You have always approved my conduct, except when I checked your rash impatience, restrained

your daring impotence, and called to you while you gnawed your chains, "Hold, for you only make the evil greater than it is." Think you that I have felt the weight of these fetters less than yourselves? Think you that my sighs, my curses, or my tears, have been fewer than your own? No. Like you, have I panted for freedom and deliverance. Rouse yourselves, my brethren —the hour is at length arrived. I solemnly renounce every preference which your united choice has hitherto bestowed on me. At our head stands an intrepid hero, —*(pointing to* Benyowsky*)*—a noble Hungarian, bred to war and victory under the Polish banners. His arm shall free us. He wills it, and his will is absolute. The fame of his exploits will go before time, and tyrants will tremble when he unsheaths his sword.—*(Confused murmurs arise among the assembly.)*—Speak, Count Benyowsky.—*(Silence immediately prevails through the assembly.)*

Ben. Speak, say you? Be our eloquence the clash of swords! Be our morning salutation the oath of fidelity! Be our evening blessing the shout of liberty! The bonds of misery are stronger than the chains of slavery. Despair is stronger than the fear of death. You know me not—I know not you—but we are wretched—therefore we are brethren. If there be one among you, who will shed his blood for you more willingly, let him step forth, and I will instantly do homage to him. My ambition excites me not to claim pre-eminence; but if it be your will, resolved am I to climb the craggy steep on which the palm of freedom flourishes, heedless whether a fragment of the rock should roll upon me, and crush my soul out. Let him who sees me waver plunge his sword into my breast. With you to conquer, or to die, is my firm and unalterable determination—so help me

God!—*(Confused sounds of approbation arise among the* Exiles.)

Crus. 'Tis well. Let every one who thinks like Crustiew bare his head, and raise his hand.—*(All do so, except* Stepanoff.)—You alone, Stepanoff?

Step. Yes, I alone. Thinkst thou that thy smooth tongue is a wire, by which we may be led like puppets? I know the power of rhetoric upon the heart. You have spoken—now will *I* speak.

Crus. Do so.

Step. My comrades, is this just? I, who am your countryman, step forward in opposition to a foreigner—a heretic. I will not dispute his heroism. He is brave—but so am I. Of his courage you have heard—mine you have witnessed. The Poles were obliged to place an Hungarian at their head—but we are Russians. He says he will shed his blood for you—that will I do also. Is it worth our trouble to discuss the value of a slave's blood? He will make a merit of his exploits—mine are the gift of brotherly affection. I will fight with you tomorrow as I feasted with you yesterday. Now, decide between us.

(Many of the Exiles *place their caps again upon their heads, when* Crustiew *attempts to address them.)*

Ben.—*(To* Crustiew.*)*—Hold! Unanimity must be our support. *Man* can do but little—*men* can do much. The chain will become useless, if *one* link be parted from another. The question is, what shall be done—not, who shall be the leader? We thirst for freedom—it is immaterial whether he or I present the smiling cup. Stepanoff, thou art a man. Give me thy hand. No ill-will, no envy shall profane this union. The decision of our partners in misfortune is a law to which I willingly submit.

Step. Enough of this prattle! How long will you delay your decision? [*A confused noise takes place.*

Several Exiles. Old Crustiew shall decide for us.

Crus.—(*Gives a signal with his hand, on which all are silent.*)—Stepanoff is valiant as the lightning, which darts from Heaven, and blasts the just as well as the unjust.—(*To* Stepanoff.)—Nay, wrinkle not your forehead, knit not your eye-brows thus; for, when our freedom is at stake, I will declare the truth. Brethren, the Persians were accustomed to throw the army which opposed them into confusion, by driving elephants before them; but never was an elephant their leader. Do you comprehend me?

All. Benyowsky! Count Benyowsky! We chuse him.

Step. Be it so. The elephant is taught to bend his knee.

Crus—(*Kneeling.*)—We swear to thee———

All.—(*Kneeling, and raising their right hands.*)—We swear———

Crus. Inviolable fidelity, and unconditional obedience. Be our united exertions devoted to our great design—if necessary, our lives. Be our tongues bound to secrecy. Be death the portion of the perjured, and be no bonds of friendship or relationship sufficient to prevent the destruction of him who abides not by his oath!

All. This we swear.

Crus. If fate should ordain that any one of us be cast into a prison, we swear that no tortures shall force us to confess that we have entered into this confederacy. We swear that we will sooner bite off our tongues, and spit them in the face of our executioners. We swear that either poison or a dagger shall rob the tyrants of their prey, and that our graves shall likewise be the graves of our secret.

All. This we swear.

Crus. Enough! [*All rise.*

Ben.—(*Kneels, and presents both hands to* Crustiew.)—From thy hand I accept thy oath, and that of all assembled here. In thy hand I pledge my own.

Crus. I accept it. God is witness to it.—(*After a solemn pause.*)—Brethren, at the hour of midnight assemble in the chapel, that we may ratify this sacred compact at the altar.

An EXILE *hastily steps from the door.*

Exile. A servant of the Governor approaches.

Crus.—(*Alarmed.*)—Heavens! Our numbers will excite suspicion.

Ben. Sing, brethren! Sing any thing which first occurs to you.

(*One of the* Exiles *sings the first line, and the rest immediately join in chorus.*

Come, my comrades, join with me;
Think no more of slavery.
Let us with a jocund lay
Drive the cares of life away.
Come, my comrades, merry be,
Think no more of slavery.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Zounds! You are vastly merry.

Crus. Welcome! Will you join us in the song?

Ser. I have no time to spare. Which of you is Count Benyowsky?

Ben. I am he.

Ser. The Governor wishes to see you.

Ben. I will come immediately.

Ser. Fare you well. [*Exit.*

Ben. Let every one go to his accustomed occupation, and beware lest he by word or look excite suspicion. Retire separately. Do not form small groups in the street. If you be alone, do not fix your eyes on any spot, as if you were brooding over some material project. Let not the sounds of sorrow or of joy, of doubt or hope, escape you. Farewell! Be mindful of the oath by which you are bound—Mine has been heard by the Almighty. [*Exit.*

All.—*(In confused conversation.)*—What a valiant man! A hero! He will deliver us from bondage. Yes. Away to the chace! Away to the chace! [*Exeunt.*

Manent CRUSTIEW *and* STEPANOFF.

Crus.—*(Calling after the departing conspirators.)*—At midnight we shall meet again.—(Stepanoff *stands in a corner with his arms folded, and a gloomy scowl upon his countenance.* Crustiew *surveys him for a few moments with a look of suspicion.*)—Stepanoff!

Step.—*(Starting.)*—Ha! Are you here still?

Crus. You seem just at this moment not to be here.

Step. I! But I do not always seem what I am.

Crus. What is the matter with thee, thou wild man?

Step. Call me rather a wild *beast.* Thou art a wise old man, most learned and most bookish in thy notions. Thou mayst think that thou dost know the nature of every creature from the worm to the elephant, but of one thing thou art ignorant—or at least thy memory has failed thee.

Crus. What may this thing be?

Step. That when the elephant is irritated, he is apt to turn upon the army to which he belongs, and that the consequence is desolation—*death.* [*Exit.*

Crus.—(*Looking after him for several moments, and then shakes his head.*)—A worm may be dangerous too. The caterpillar jealousy already feeds upon the blossom of our freedom. [*Exit.*

SCENE, ATHANASIA'S *Chamber. On the Table are a Book and a Chess-board.*

Enter ATHANASIA *and* THEODORA.

Athan. You are sure my father sent?

Theo. Long since.

Athan. And he is not yet come!

Theo. Good Heavens! If he can do every thing else, he can't fly.

Athan.—(*Walking up and down with marks of great uneasiness.*)—How strange are my sensations! I know not what I want. Is it still early, Theodora?

Theo. It is almost noon.

Athan.—(*Walking to her looking-glass.*)—I am not yet dressed.

Theo. Why, I have mentioned that a hundred times, but you forget every thing to-day.

Athan. Forget every thing! Just the reverse! I am all thought.

Theo. True. So you were this morning, when, instead of milk, you poured coffee into your tea, and yet swallowed it without perceiving the mistake.

Athan.—(*Still before the glass.*)—My hair is in disorder.

Theo. You have had no sleep. You tossed from side to side throughout the night.

Athan. Whom did my father send? The creature must be a perfect snail.

Theo.—*(Looking through the window.)*—Ha! Who comes yonder?

Athan.—*(Turning suddenly round.)*—Is it the Count?

Theo.—*(Smiling.)*—Count! You mean demigod.

Athan.—*(Who has hastened to the window.)*—He does not look up.

Theo. You ought not to look down.

Athan. Do you know how I feel?

Theo. Thereabouts.

Athan. As if we had been long acquainted—as if I ought to call to him.

Theo. How will this end?

Athan. I never thought so little of futurity as I do to-day.

Theo. So much the worse.

Athan. Hist! I hear my father's voice.

Theo. Farewell to all advice.—(*Casting a sly look towards* Athanasia, *who has thrown herself into a chair, and pretends to be reading with great attention.*)—Excellent! The very emblem of artless simplicity! Oh, what a precious thing is the heart of a woman! For ever is the tempest raging in it, yet ever is the surface smooth.—*(Looks over* Athanasia's *shoulder, takes the book out of her hand, turns it, and gives it to her again.)* —Ha! Ha! Ha! Why, you were holding your book the wrong way. Ha! Ha! Ha! [*Exit.*

Athan.—*(Alone.)*—The letters dance before me—*(Casting a glance towards the door;)*—and my heart flies to meet him.

Enter GOVERNOR *and* BENYOWSKY.

Gov. This is my daughter, Count.—*(Mutual compliments are exchanged.)*—I repeat my request. I have heard that want of employment for the head and heart, is the fundamental cause of learning and of love. My daughter's heart is her father's property—with her head do what you please. It is an uncultivated garden, but the soil is good.

Ben. I have been bred to arms, and small is the extent of my knowledge. To arrange a battle, or a riband—to form an army, or a cap—to sketch a plan of attack, or a pattern for a gown—are very different things.

Athan. My simple morning-dress contradicts this assertion.

Ben. Modesty and beauty are two amiable sisters.

Athan. If I feel that you make me blush, I must run away.

Ben. A threat, which compels truth itself to be silent.

Gov. Well, Athanasia, you must be grateful. Count Benyowsky will cultivate your mind; in return for which you will make his fetters lighter.

Athan. With pleasure will I endeavour to do that.

Gov. He will instruct you in the French language and the harp; and you will let him have a brother's share of the few amusements which our retirement from the world affords. I release you, Count, from all public employment, and will provide for your subsistence.

Ben. My gratitude———

Gov. Hold! Who gains most by this? You or I? I now leave you awhile with your pupil, after which we will play a game at chess together. [*Exit.*

(*A pause ensues, during which* Athanasia *appears confused, and casts down her eyes.*)

Athan. I wish the pupil may not disgrace her instructor.

Ben.—(*Likewise confused.*)—By too soon surpassing him.

Athan. Are you patient?

Ben. What a question to a slave!

Athan. How strange it is that happiness and misery should be thus interwoven! When one flower fades, another thrives from its remains. Your lot is bitter, Count, but it sweetens ours. To alleviate your sorrows be our duty—Duty! How could so cold a word drop from my lips!—Be our delight.

Ben.—(*With a look of astonishment and transport.*)—Heavens! I hear a language, which was become foreign to my ear.

Athan. This country is, I own, cold and uncultivated. Our flowers are devoid of fragrance, our fruits of flavour, and our men of sensibility———

Ben. Oh, my lady, man is the only fruit which cannot degenerate in any climate. Weeds flourish everywhere.

Athan. Why weeds?

Ben. Because it is not worth while to mention the few grains of wheat which grow among them.

Athan. Your language betrays that you have suffered much misfortune.

Ben. Much! Alas, yes. *One* misfortune may be much. I am a slave.

Athan. We will make your slavery tolerable.

Ben.—(*With great solemnity.*)—Slavery can never be tolerable,—(*suddenly assuming an air of gallantry,*)—unless it be the slavery of love.

Athan.—(*Cheerfully.*)—There is no such thing as the slavery of love.

Ben. Is love ever felt in Kamtschatka.

Athan. We live in Kamtschatka.

Ben. Without love, perhaps, as without sun.

Athan. No. What is not produced by the warmth of the sun, is effected by the warm imagination of a poet. We read as often as we can—we feel what we read. I should be glad if there were more good books in our language. I have long wished to learn French. You have promised my father———

Ben. To do all in my power.

Athan. Shall we make a beginning?

Ben. We have no book at present.

Athan. I don't wish to learn from a book, but from you.

Ben. But how, if the instructor be unable to speak in the presence of his pupil?

Athan. Because he has not a book? Count, how you gaze at me! I read in your eyes more than I ever read in any book.

Ben.—(*Confused.*)—What a pleasure do the fair sex feel in the embarrassment of a soldier!

Athan. Because it flatters our weakness, and does honour to the weapons with which we attack your sex. But no more of this! We can proceed without a book. When you mention a word, I will repeat it till I have acquired the proper pronunciation.

Ben. A word!

Athan. Yes. I will learn a dozen to-day, and another dozen to-morrow. At this rate I shall be able at the end of a year to converse with you in French. Let us begin. What is the French word for *heart?*

Ben. Le cœur.

Athan. Le cœur—le cœur. There, you see. I know that already. *Le cœur.* But how would you express, *The heart beats?*

Ben. Le cœur palpite.

Athan. Le cœur palpite. What a charming language! —*(Laying her hand on her heart, and sighing.)*—*Le cœur palpite.* I am an apt scholar; for I feel what I learn.

Ben.—(Embarrassed.)—I had almost forgotten that the Governor expects me to play at chess. Have the goodness to allow my departure.

Athan. Why, Count, I always understood a lesson continued for an hour.

Ben.—(*Significantly.*)—A whole hour?

Athan. Yes. Am I so very tedious?

Ben. For Heaven's sake, forget not that I am a banished wretch, and let me not forget it.

Athan. Why not? I will not banish you. You fought against the Russians. What is that to me?—You were made a prisoner. What is that to me?—You were brought hither. What is that—Hold! That is something to me.

Ben. Is it indeed? What office do you hold here?

Athan. The delightful office of consoling the unfortunate.

Ben.—(Deeply affected.)—I see that nature has not been unjust even here. She has robbed the meadows of their verdure, but she has imparted all her stores to one amiable soul. Kamtschatka is not a desert.

Athan. Friendship, like the swallow, builds its nest every where. Happiness is not like the butterfly, which in summer-sunshine flits from flower to flower, but becomes torpid in the winter. Happiness dwells also close to the north pole.

Ben. Heavens! what a flower has this climate produced!

Athan. Would you make me vain? But, no. I know how I am to understand this. On a barren waste a common daisy pleases.

Ben. What is art compared to nature?

Athan. Does my frankness please you?

Ben. May I be allowed to feel a pleasure in it?

Athan. Unaccountable man! How bold is your eye! How timid is your language!

Ben. Oh, then let the discretion of my language be an apology for the boldness of my eye. A word, floating on the lips, and a stone grasped in the hand, are harmless; but when the word is uttered, or the stone is thrown, who can answer for the consequences? His Excellency expects me. Lady, accept my thanks for the fresh blossom which your hand has woven in the faded wreath of Benyowsky's happiness. Accept my thanks for permitting Benyowsky to be proud again. Yes, I am proud of your esteem. To my misfortunes only can I owe this excess of kindness. Who could misunderstand this generous sensation? Who could be so malicious as to misinterpret it? Lady, to you is devoted every sensation which is allowed to exist in the heart of a slave.

[*Bows respectfully, and exit.*

Athan.—(*Looks after him for some time—walks up and down in great agitation—takes up the book, turns over a few leaves, and again throws it aside—walks in deep meditation to the chess-board, and mechanically moves the pieces—sighs—lays her hand on her bosom, and says,*)—*Le cœur palpite.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Room.*

CRUSTIEW *is discovered at the Window, anxiously awaiting the Return of* BENYOWSKY.

Crus. Where can he remain so long? His presence animates our body. The project begins to shoot up, and bud—his active warmth must bring it to maturity.

Enter STEPANOFF, *with a bottle and glass in his hand.*

Step.—*(Not perfectly sober.)*—Good day to you, old Crustiew! Let us drink to the health of all prattling chamber-maids. [*Drinks.*

Crus. What do you mean by that?

Step. Much or little, as you please. I have made a precious discovery. It has quite intoxicated me.

Crus. The cause of your intoxication is in your hand.

Step. Pshaw! Fill my head with fire instead of brains, and I shall then be all sobriety, compared with this intoxication.

Crus. What wild extravagant ideas!

Step. Do you know Kudrin, the Cossack?

Crus. That is a drunkard's question. Is he not one of our confederacy?

Step. Don't trust him; for he is the slave of a woman. He is in love with Theodora, Athanasia's attendant.

Crus. What care I for that?

Step. She knows all his secrets—he all her's.—Ha! Ha! Ha!

Crus. I don't understand you.

Step. Satan, I thank thee for the service thou hast rendered me.—*(Fills the glass and drinks.)*—Long life to the devil!

Crus. Wretch! Thy drunkenness has made thee blasphemous.

Step. Blasphemous! I feel exactly as I ought to do. —*(Places the bottle and glass on the table.)*—There! You may drink the rest.

Crus. Go, and sleep awhile.

Step. Ay, you would be glad enough if I were never to wake again.—*(With a sneer.)*—Good night, old greybeard. [*Exit.*

Crus. What enigma is working in this wild blockhead's brain? His expressions, though confused, appeared to be the effect of something more than mere intoxication.

Enter BENYOWSKY, *hastily.*

Ben. I have much to impart to you.

Crus. And I to you.

Ben. Love shuffles the cards. Our game is won.

Crus. What mean you?

Ben. All my knowledge of mankind, all my knowledge of womankind, deceives me, if Athanasia be not well inclined towards me.

Crus.—(*Smiles, and shakes his head.*)—This affection has sprung up in a single night like a mushroom.

Ben. Love is always an unexpected visitor? Did you ever hear of preparations having been made for his reception?

Crus. Well! To what does this tend?

Ben. Can you not guess?

Crus. Will you marry her?

Ben. I am married.

Crus. Will you seduce her?

Ben. Perish such a thought!

Crus. Will you return her affection?

Ben. I cannot.—Alas! I know not——

Crus. Well?

Ben. Advise me how to act.

Crus. I advise no one who has formed a previous determination.

Ben. Determination!

Crus. Ask yourself this question. Does not the blooming Athanasia please you?

Ben.—*(After remaining in suspense for a moment, shrugs his shoulders.)*—If I look into my heart——

Crus. What find you there?

Ben.—*(After a pause.)*—Sensuality and vanity.

Crus. The vanity of man is an odious idol, to which many an unsuspicious heart has fallen a victim.

Ben. The advantages we gain by this are great.

Crus. True, if you feel strong enough not to overstep the proper bounds; false, if you intend to found our happiness upon the ruin of a harmless being.

Ben. Never!

Crus. I am old, and superstition is the inheritance of age. I would not that our project should succeed at the expence of an innocent creature's happiness. Better is it to be a slave, and daily feel the whip of tyranny, than to be free, and every moment feel the scourge of conscience. Oft as a tempest overtook us on the ocean, I should exclaim, "This is the vengeance of the Almighty." I therefore claim from you a vow, that Athanasia's virtue shall be sacred to you.

Ben. The detested thought can find no place in my imagination. I swear what you require.

Crus. Enough! Then may you nourish her fond wishes, and feast her mind with lovely visions of anticipated rapture. When we are gone, all will be well again; for every thing can be forgotten, loss of innocence excepted. Meanwhile, draw an impenetrable veil over this secret. Let it not be known by our associates. Beware especially of Stepanoff.

Ben. Why?

Crus. Because he loves her to distraction.

Ben. Loves Athanasia! Does he know her?

Crus. As much as we all do.

Ben. Does she know him?

Crus. That I doubt.

Ben. Did he ever speak to her?

Crus. Never.

Ben. And is yet in love with her?

Crus. To distraction, I tell you. Now a word respecting the preparations I have made. In some degree I have been successful—in some degree the reverse.

Ben. First, to the successful part!

Crus. It exceeds the other. Tschulosnikoff sailed some time since to the Aleutian Islands for the purpose of catching sea-otters. Eight and twenty men served under him. They are returned, and are very much dissatisfied. These I have gained over to our interest, and the vessel is our own.

Ben. The voice of an angel!

Crus. They will assemble at midnight in the chapel, and bind their fate to our's by an oath.

Ben. You have succeeded most happily. Oh, Crustiew, my head is like a magic lantern. Lighted by my fancy, the gay pictures of futurity flit past me. Already do I see myself in China, Japan, India; already do we double the Cape of Good Hope.—Hope, thou daughter of Heaven!

Crus. Be not so hasty. Hide this fire beneath the ashes. We have not yet attained our object.

Ben. The way is smooth; the cliffs are all behind us.

Crus. But while we wander on the smooth path, it is possible we may suddenly sink into an abyss. Malice peeps at us from every corner. Envy listens to us on every side. He who thinks that his foes are on the highway, knows little of the matter. They are lurking in the bushes, and when you have passed them, will fall upon you unawares.

Ben. All meet me with respect.

Crus. So much the worse. The flag, which they hang out, will make you feel secure. Many hate you, because there are always people discerning enough to feel the superiority of a great mind, and base enough to envy it. Many hate you on account of the large sums which they have lost to you at chess. Among these is Kasarinoff.

Ben. The foolish merchant?

Crus. He detests you.

Ben. He! You are mistaken. This very morning I received from him a present of tea and sugar.

Crus. Be on your guard. His villany may be sugared, but villany it still remains.

Ben. Suspicious old man! Do not fancy people worse than they are. Mistrust has hindered many a good action.

Crus. Caution is not mistrust.

Enter WASILI.

Wasili. A misfortune!

Ben. What is it?

Wasili. Our little dog Sabac is dead.

Crus. Then we have lost a watchful friend. How happened it?

Wasili. I was preparing tea for Count Benyowsky, and he amused me so much with his gambols, that I gave him a piece of the sugar sent by Kasarinoff. In a few minutes after he had swallowed it, he rolled his eyes, became convulsed, and died. [Benyowsky *starts.*

Crus.—*(After a pause.)*—How now, Benyowsky?

Ben. I am petrified.

Crus. Which of us best knows the nature of mankind?

Ben. You. But he shall repent this diabolical design. I will hasten to the Governor———

Crus. Not unarmed, I hope?

Ben. A poisoner is the meanest of assassins. A look will terrify him. Wasili, fetch me a piece of the sugar. [*Exit* Wasili.

Poor Sabac! If in my age I find repose, my garden shall be adorned with a statue of thee, that I may never forget my gratitude to Providence. [*Going.*

Enter TSCHULOSNIKOFF.

Tsch.—*(With a look of fury seizes* Benyowsky *by the collar.)*—Hold! Not another step shalt thou proceed.

Ben.—*(Pushes him back with superior strength, so that he almost falls.)*—Address me from that corner. What dost thou want?

Tsch. Damnation! Am I to be treated thus by an exile?

Ben. Thou shouldst not have forgotten that an exile is a man.

Tsch. Disgracefully attacked by the disgraced?

Ben. That is so much the worse for thee.

Tsch. The Governor shall know it.

Ben. He shall.

Tsch. Declare what are your intentions.

Ben. To break thy neck, unless thy language is restrained within proper bounds.

Crus.—(*Apart to* Benyowsky.)—Be calm. Passion will not assist our cause.

Tsch. What are you whispering in his ear, old villain? You have bribed my crew. You have excited them to discord and rebellion.

Crus.—(*Confused.*)—I!

Ben. 'Tis false.

Tsch.—(*To* Benyowsky.)—A conspiracy is formed, and you are at the head of it.

Ben. 'Tis false.

Tsch. My pilot's conscience would not allow him to conceal it. He has discovered all.

Ben. What he has said is false.

Tsch. False! Then why is yon old scoundrel in such consternation? Terror has robbed him of his faculties. Answer me, old fellow: Do you know my crew?

Crus. I do.

Tsch. Why did you steal to their huts before daybreak? What had you to do with them, when you were all together, and the doors were barred?

Ben. Blockhead, I can explain this matter in few words. The Governor, and several respectable inhabitants of the town, have persuaded me to establish a public school. I want to erect a large building for this purpose; and as your crew were unemployed, I thought of hiring them to work for me. I commissioned Crustiew to do this for me, and he agreed with them.

Tsch. A very likely story, no doubt! But let me tell you——

Ben. Hold! I have conferred on you the honour of refuting your ridiculous suspicion; but were I any longer to brook your preposterous conduct, I should be guilty

of weakness, or of fear. Beware, therefore, how you proceed.

Tsch. What! Dare you threaten——

Ben. I dare do more than threaten.

Tsch. Is a lawful citizen to be insulted by an exiled vagabond?

Ben.——*(Strikes him.)*——Take that——and that——and that—— [*Kicks him out of doors.*

Tsch.—*(Whose fury almost chokes him.)*—This shall cost thee thy life.

Crus. We are lost.

Ben. Why?

Crus. He is gone to the Governor.

Ben. So will I.

Crus. He will be violent.

Ben. I will be calm.

Crus. And should he not convince, he will awake suspicion.

Ben. Collected firmness will easily overpower unbridled fury.

Crus.—*(Goes to the window.)*—Haste, then, to the citadel before him. He is on foot. Throw yourself into the sledge which you see yonder with two dogs in harness, and drive over the river. It is a nearer road.

Ben. Enough! If no hindrance occur, you shall soon see me again.—*(As he goes* Wasili *meets him, and presents a small packet.)*—True. I had almost forgotten the sugar. [*Exit.*

Crus.—*(Alone.)*—Had he not been here, our game would have been lost. My firmness quite forsook me. Slavery and age subdue both the body and the mind. Youth feasts on hopes—manhood bursts into action—age and infancy have only fruitless wishes for their portion. [*Exit.*

SCENE, *one of the* GOVERNOR'S *Rooms.*

Enter ATHANASIA.

Athan. At length I am alone, and can give vent to the sensations of my heart. Oh that my mother were alive! She would have understood me. I must relieve my mind. He is noble, and shall know my sentiments. Confidence creates generosity. Nothing can sooner disarm a man of honour, than the avowal, "I am in your power." Hist! I hear somebody on the stairs. That hasty step is his.

Enter STEPANOFF.

Alas, no. My senses deceive my heart—Do you wish to see my father?

Step. No—you fair lady.

Athan. What do you want?

Step. More than a god can bestow—your affection.

Athan. Are you mad?

Step. I shall be, if you reject me.

Athan. I ought not to listen to you. [*Going.*

Step. Stay, for Heaven's sake, stay. Listen to me, and decide as the humanity and goodness of your nature will direct. I grant I am an exile, an outcast of mankind. I was banished for a hasty juvenile indiscretion. My birth is equal to your's; my heart is worthy of your's. Chance may release me from the chains of slavery, but your chains I shall for ever wear. Fair Athanasia, cast on me a look of kindness. Oh, let a single gleam of hope shine through the dreary darkness of my life.

Athan. Enough! I can make no reply to your declaration; but from compassion I will conceal it from my father. [*Going.*

Step. Oh, stay, and let the words of sincere, of ardent love, find their way to your heart. It is about seven years ago that I was first obliged to work on the fortifications. Unaccustomed as I was to labour, my strength was soon exhausted. Powerless I lay stretched on the rampart, and prayed to Heaven for death. Then it was that you appeared with your good mother. Athanasia Alexiewna, you were then a little girl. Fearfully you started back, clung to your mother, and besought her to assist me. She gave me a piece of money—and I —gave you my heart. You are grown—my affection has grown with you. Years have passed away, yet still I see the little cherub, as if the circumstance had happened yesterday. Grateful I have ever been, and gratitude is ripened into love. Do not condemn me—do not reject me. I require no oath, no promise. I only beg I may be allowed to hope, that if fate should ever smile on me again, you will also smile on me.

Athan. I most sincerely pity you; but I cannot, will not, give encouragement to useless hopes.

Step.—(*With asperity.*)—You cannot because you will not.

Athan. To whom am I accountable for my sentiments?

Step. Another attachment lurks in your bosom.

Athan. Does my kindness excite audacity?

Step. The charms of novelty have attracted you.

Athan. Begone!

Step. Mere bombast has conquered you.

Athan. Leave me, insolent man. I chuse to be alone.

Step. Do you expect a visitor? Is he coming, lady?

Athan. Who?

Step. The happy man, for whose sake I am trampled in the dust.

Athan. Shall I call my father?

Step. Do as you please. My life is now of no value to me. The delightful air-built castle of my hopes is destroyed. Weep I will not—pray I cannot. None but fools weep and pray. To a man of spirit and determination, despair has granted another resource. If, like Sampson, he be made a mark for contempt and derision, he can at least grasp the pillars of the temple, and crush his foes as well as himself by their fall.

Athan. You rave.

Step. I do not, yet; though soon, perhaps, I may. I will observe you with minute attention, watch your every look, pry into your every design. I will discover your every involuntary motion. Love, jealousy, despair will sharpen all my faculties; and if Satan will but grant that I may see what I wish—Ha! then shall the sport begin. Furies shall dance upon my grave, and brandish in the air your nuptial torch.

Athan. Heavens! How shall I escape this madman?—(*Espies* Benyowsky, *and runs joyfully towards him.*)—Ha! Count Benyowsky!

Enter BENYOWSKY.

Step. Hell and the devil! There he is. I have seen enough. Farewell, lady. It is, doubtless, time that I should take my leave. I know how to die—but not unrevenged. [*Exit.*

Ben. What means this? You in a tremor! He in a rage!

Athan. I am indeed in a tremor.

Ben. Why?

Athan. I will complain to my father.

Ben. Of what!

Athan. No, I will not.

Ben. What will you not do?

Athan. I pity him. He is insane.

Ben. Insane!

Athan. He loves me.

Ben. Is he, on that account, insane?

Athan. An exile———

Ben.—*(With a degree of asperity.)*—True, Madam. That I had forgotten.

Athan.—*(Confused.)*—Not because he is an exile—No—I did not mean to say that——

Ben. It was, however, a very rational remark.

Athan. But what is rational is not always true. Cannot an exile be deserving of affection?

Ben. He can, but he must not.

Athan. He may, but the man who has been here cannot—*That* man, I say, cannot.

Ben. Where is his Excellency? I must speak to him.

Athan. He is—Dear Count, I have offended you.

Ben. Offended me! By what?

Athan. You are an exile too?

Ben. Alas! I am.

Athan. I so easily forget that———

Ben. I shall never forget it.

Athan. That arises from—what you call rational.

Ben. You should praise me for it.

Athan. I do praise you by my words; but my heart—

Ben. The heart likes to be flattered.

Athan.—*(Bashfully.)*—You are not a flatterer.

Ben.—*(In a firm tone.)*—No.

Athan. But there are truths which the heart likes to hear.

Ben. Truth should not always be spoken.

Athan. At least not by every body.

Ben. Right.

Athan. I mean, for instance, by Stepanoff.

Ben. And his equals.

Athan. Who is his equal?

Ben. Every exile.

Athan. *Every* exile! I understand you.—(*Suppressing a sigh.*)—Natural coldness is not a virtue.

Ben. But to suffer and be silent is a merit.

Athan. Or obstinacy. My mother told me, if I always declared what I felt, I should never feel what I ought not.

Ben. This one maxim is a full description of your mother's sentiments.

Athan. She bequeathed me many such maxims. If she were still alive—Alas! her grave is on the hill close to the fortress. When the first grass peeps through the snow, I'll hasten thither, and entrust my secret to the earth.—(*After a pause.*)—You do not ask me what my secret is.

Ben. I have no right to do so.

Athan. You are my instructor—and I must place confidence in you. Give me your advice.

Ben. Respecting what?

Athan. If I felt an affection for Stepanoff——

Ben. Well?

Athan. What should I do?

Ben. Discover your attachment to your father.

Athan. And then?

Ben. If his influence could restore Stepanoff to liberty, you might, without a blush, give him your hand.

Athan. You have said exactly what I feel.

Ben. Happy Stepanoff!

Athan. Indeed, dear Count! Should you think him happy—whom I love?

Ben. If he possess a feeling heart——

Athan.—(*Bashfully leans upon him, and hides her face upon his shoulder.*)—Do you possess one?

Ben.—(*Agitated.*)—Athanasia!

Athan. Yes or no?

Ben. Amiable innocence!

Athan. Yes or no.—(Benyowsky *involuntarily clasps her in his arms.*)—I fly to my father. [*Exit.*

Ben. Athanasia! What would you do? Gracious Heavens! What is all this? The angelic charms of innocence surprised and overpowered me.—(*Striking his forehead.*)—Emilia! My wife!

Enter IWAN.

Iwan. There he is, as if sent for.

Ben.—(*Alarmed.*)—Has any one enquired for me?

Iwan. Enquired! Search has been made for you.

Ben. By whom?

Iwan. By me, because I want to have some conversation with you.

Ben. About what?

Iwan. Matters of importance.

Ben. At another time. I am come hither on business, which requires immediate attention. [*Going.*

Iwan. Hold! Stir not from the spot. Perhaps the fate of centuries depends upon this single moment.

Ben.—(*Aside.*)—Intolerable blockhead!—(*Aloud.*)—What are you pleased to command?

Iwan. Pleased to command!—(*With a mysterious air, and consequential smile.*)—A trifle.—(*After a solemn pause.*)—Half the world.

Ben. What say you?—(*Aside.*)—He is insane, too.

Iwan. You start.—Ha! Ha! Ha!—Upon these shoulders is a head, and in that head strange things are happening.

Ben. That I perceive.

Iwan. Who subdued Kamtschatka?—A Cossack. Who is captain of the Cossacks?—Iwan Fedrowitsch.

Ben. That I know, but———

Iwan. Silence! Utter not a syllable. Promise that my confidence shall not be misplaced, that what I have entrusted to you shall remain an inviolable secret.

Ben.—*(Smiling.)*—Most willingly.

Iwan. I have a little scheme. When I use the term *little scheme*, I mean to imply a *great project*. In short, —*(drawing him aside with an air of mystery,)*—I intend to found a colony in the Aleutian Islands.

Ben. Indeed!

Iwan. You shall lend me your assistance in forwarding this plan.

Ben. If you wish it———

Iwan. When I use the term *assistance*, I mean to imply, *pen*; for, with respect to the sword, a Cossack wants no assistance. You shall persuade the Governor to submit your statement to her Imperial Majesty.

Ben. Proceed.

Iwan. Don't you perceive I shall make you all happy? The Governor will be promoted to the command of Ochozk, you will take his place at Kamtschatka, I shall be Viceroy of the Aleutian Islands, and before you aware of it, conqueror of California.

Ben. Bravo! Your project is most admirable.

Iwan. Yes, yes.—*(With great solemnity.)*—I wish you joy, Governor of Kamtschatka.

Ben.—*(With equal gravity.)*—I thank your Californian Majesty; but it would be more agreeable to me, if you would be graciously pleased to appoint me your prime minister and commander in chief.

Iwan. Count, your petition is granted.

Ben. I am deeply affected———

Iwan. So am I; for I can't refrain from laughter, when I fancy that I see you at the head of my army.—

Enough! Be an alliance offensive and defensive concluded between us. [*Presenting his hand.*

Ben.—*(Shaking it.)*—Agreed.—*(Aside.)*—I'll bear with the fool, for he may be useful to me.

Enter GOVERNOR.

Gov. Welcome, Count Benyowsky! Where is my daughter?

Ben. She was here but a few minutes since.

Gov. Theodora says she was in search of me.

Iwan.—*(Consequentially.)*—We have in the mean time found a kingdom.—Ha! Ha!

Ben. Before we take possession of it, I am come to demand justice.

Gov. How so?

Ben. A madman, one Tschulosnikoff, has attacked me in my hut, and irritated me so far by his insolence that I kicked him out of doors.

Gov. What was the cause?

Ben. I hired his crew to assist me in erecting a building for a school, and the blockhead asserts that I wished to excite mutiny and insurrection.

Gov. The idea is as absurd as malicious.

Iwan. The scoundrel must feel the knout.

Gov. I will send for him.

Ben. Your kindness towards me has created many enemies, who absolutely wish even to assassinate me.

Gov. Assassinate you!

Ben. Behold a proof.—*(Produces the sugar.)*—Under the mask of friendship, Kasarinoff, the merchant, sent me this sugar. A dog, which had eat a piece of it, died instantaneously.

Gov. Is it possible? Give me the sugar.

[*Takes it, and rings.*

Iwan. The scoundrel must feel the knout.

Enter a SERVANT.

Gov. Send immediately for Tschulosnikoff, and Kasarinoff.

Ser. Tschulosnikoff is already in the antichamber, and requests an audience.

Gov. Let him come. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter TSCHULOSNIKOFF.

Tsch. I appear before your Excellency———

Gov. With great effrontery, as I perceive.

Iwan. You are a worthless fellow.

Tsch. I accuse this man of high treason.

Iwan. What! My minister!

Gov. Villain, dare you calumniate a man who, even in fetters, has done more for the crown, than a hundred free scoundrels like yourself?

Tsch. I have proofs———

Gov. Silence! You cannot feel the force of any thing great or good. I know the Count, and every thing he does; therefore, beware how you proceed against him; for the man who dares to place any impediment in his way, has been shone upon by the sun for the last time.

Tsch. He excites rebellion———

Gov. Begone! I'll hear no more. You owe him gratitude, and pay your debt with calumny. He wants to make human beings of your children, and this does not suit your brutal dispositions.

Tsch. But my pilot——

Gov. Peace! Begone!

Tsch. He has beat me——

Gov. He treated you properly.

Tsch. But, good Heavens—— [Governor *rings*.

Enter a SERVANT.

Gov. To the guard with this fellow!

Tsch. Very well—I shall go. Repentance will soon overtake you,—(*To the* Governor,)—and vengeance you.

[*Shakes his clenched fist at* Benyowsky, *and exit.*

Ben. He still threatens.

Gov. His threats are ridiculous.

Iwan. Forty lashes will cool him.

Gov. Be at ease, Count. I promise you justice and security. Calumny can only cast a shade over a good conscience, like black gauze over a snowy bosom. It still shines through the slender covering. I know these fellows, and I know you. I would intrust you with my honour and my life.

Iwan. And I with California.

Ben.—(*Aside, with his hand upon his breast.*)—I was not prepared for this.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Kasarinoff——

Gov. Let him come. [*Exit* Servant.

Enter KASARINOFF.

Kas. Your Excellency has been pleased to command—

Gov.—(*Calling to the* Servant.)—Bring tea. Come nearer, my dear Kasarinoff. I hear you are diligent and attentive to business. You deserve encouragement.

Kas. The honour——

Gov. Shall be no more than justice. A great merchant is a great man. The monarch's concerns extend through his dominions; the merchant's through the world. With his right hand he touches Asia; with his left, America. By a stroke of his pen, he connects one quarter of the globe with another, makes lemons grow

in Kamtschatka, and finds a gold mine in a desert. Reverence should be paid to those who deserve it. Take a chair close to me, my dear Kasarinoff. Let us drink a cup of tea together, and have a little conversation upon business.—(*Pours out the tea.*)—This is Caravan tea, and I believe very good. It was sent to me from Irkuzk, as a present. I must confess I ought to be grateful; for my friends are bountiful in their presents.—(*Throws sugar into* Kasarinoff's *cup.*)—This sugar, for instance—what a beautiful colour it is! Count Benyowsky was so kind as to send it this morning.—(*Throws another piece into* Kasarinoff's *cup.*)—You deal in sugar and tea, I recollect. Try how you like these.

Kas.—(*Embarrassed and alarmed.*)—I thank your Excellency; but this is not the hour at which I usually drink tea.

Gov. Never mind that.

Kas. I am, indeed, at no time very fond of tea.

Gov. Taste this, then, to oblige me.

Kas It makes me feel heated and nervous.

Gov. Only a single cup!

Kas. I must beg your Excellency to excuse me.

Gov.—(*Gravely.*)—Drink, friend Kasarinoff. Do you think I have mixed poison with it?

Kas. Heaven forbid that I should harbour such a thought!

Gov. Drink, then, I command you.

Kas.—(*Takes the cup with a trembling hand.*)—I have such an aversion to tea——

Gov. I'll put a little more sugar into it—then it can't do you any harm. [*Throws another piece into the cup.*

Kas.—(*Trembling.*)—I—I———

[*The cup falls from his hand.*

Gov.—(*Springs up.*)—Ha!—Poisoner!

Kas.—(*Sinks on his knees.*)—Mercy!

Iwan. The knout!

Gov. Your wicked damnable intention is evident. Count Benyowsky, pronounce sentence on him. It shall be executed this very hour.

Kas. Mercy!

Iwan. The knout!

Ben. The punishment to be inflicted on this man is left to me?

Gov. Entirely.

Ben. I have your promise that his fate entirely rests on my decision?

Gov. You have.

Ben. Enough!—I pardon him.

Gov. How!

Iwan. What!

Kas.——(*Embracing his knees.*)——Heavens! what a man!—(*Almost unable to articulate.*)—I have—no words—Oh, let these tears wash away my guilt!

Ben. Rise, depart, and be my friend.

Gov. No, Count. This I cannot allow.

Ben. I have your promise.

Gov. You act nobly, but——

Ben. If I act nobly, your heart is surety for the fulfilment of your promise.

Gov.—(*Embraces him with emotion.*)—I have esteemed you hitherto—now I admire you.—(*To* Kasarinoff.)—Go, and make yourself deserving of his pardon.

Kas.——(*Sobbing.*)—I cannot speak.—I'll bring my children. They shall thank him. [*Exit.*

Iwan.—(*Affected by this scene against his inclination, offers his hand to* Benyowsky.)—Friend, you have acted like a Cossack. I appoint you Lord Chief Justice of California.

Enter ATHANASIA.

Athan.—(*Rushes towards her father, and throws her arms round his neck.*)—My father!

Gov. What now?

Athan. At last I have found you.

Gov. What do you want?

Athan. Your consent.

Gov. To what?

Athan. To my happiness.

Gov. Is not your happiness my wish? Speak!

Athan. I am in love.

Gov. In love!

Ben.—(*Much embarrassed.*)—I will withdraw.

Athan. Stay, Count Benyowsky. I am not ashamed of my affection.

Gov. I am astonished. So suddenly——

Iwan. I never observed any symptom.

Athan.—(*Goes to* Benyowsky, *takes his hand, and turns to the* Governor.)—Your blessing, my father!

Gov. How! Is it the Count whom you love?

Athan. Whom else could I love?

Iwan.—(*Mortified.*)—Come, come——

Gov. But don't you consider———

Athan. I consider every thing. I consider all his perfections, and the dying words of my mother. Shall I repeat them? Yes, it was in this room, in this very room she died. Here stood her bed—here you sat—and there I knelt. You wept, I sobbed, and my mother groaned. In her last struggle she once more raised herself, grasped your hand, and said, in a broken voice, "Let my Athanasia marry the man whom she loves." This is he. Oh, my father, give me the man whom I love.

Gov. Athanasia, you have taken me by surprise——

Athan.—(*Drawing* Benyowsky *after her.*)—Here—on this spot, where my mother died—here do we implore your blessing.

Gov. When the Count is released from slavery———

Athan. Is he not free whenever you declare him so? Spirit of my mother, descend, and let thy influence prevail upon my father to fulfil thy last request.

Iwan. Friend, I think you might, without danger——

Athan. Danger! Is it dangerous to reward virtue?

Iwan. The ukase of Peter the First extends to many cases.

Athan. Blessings upon Peter's ashes for this edict!

Iwan. The preservation of the vessel on the voyage from Ochozk——

Athan. Oh, yes! That alone——

Iwan. The introduction of cultivation——

Athan. True. Oh, Iwan Fedrowitsch, you are a good man.

Iwan. The Cossacks are always good men. Besides all this, when we take into account the Aleutian Islands and California——

Athan. You don't say a word, dear Count.

Ben. What can I say? I am tormented by the idea that your worthy father may believe I have urged you to take this step.

Athan. That you did not. No, my father. He afflicted my poor heart with his noble and rational sentiments, as he called them. Oh, my father, are you still irresolute? Here do I kneel, where I knelt at my mother's death-bed—here, where she pronounced on me her last blessing. That blessing must be now fulfilled—Now, or never!

Gov. Rise, Athanasia. Be it so. My hoary head obeys the impulse of my heart. I venture something for you and him, but you both deserve it. Count Benyowsky, you are free. The secretary shall execute the instrument in its legal form.—(*Clasping him in his arms.*)—I embrace my son.

Ben. Heavens! Is it possible?

Athan.—(*Kissing her father's hand.*)—Oh, my dear father! accept my heartfelt thanks. I am overpowered with joy. I know not how I feel. I could weep—I must kiss you, dear Iwan. Benyowsky is free. He is free, and mine. Where is Theodora? The whole family shall participate my happiness—the whole castle—the whole town.—(*Puts a full purse into* Benyowsky's *hand.*) —This for the poor captives. He is free—he is mine. [*Exit.*

Ben.—(*Deeply affected.*)—If your Excellency——

Gov. Why not call me father?

Ben. If I be at present dumb————

Gov. I understand you.

Iwan. Ay, ay. I understand what you mean by dumb, too. Fish are dumb, because they drink water. When we have emptied a couple of bottles, our tongues will begin to wag.

Gov. Very true, Iwan Fedrowitsch. Wine is as much the companion of joy, as dew of a fine morning. Come.

Ben. Excess of joy and grief are nearly related to each other. Both express themselves in tears; not in words. Both demand retirement. I beg permission to withdraw for a few moments. [*Exit.*

Iwan. What a strange man! When I am happy, I must drink.

Gov. Let him go. Joy is not a coin fixed at the bottom of a bowl.

Iwan. Whether it be a bowl or a bottle I don't care, except that the bowl is rather more satisfactory, because it is generally rather larger. Now, as to joy—when I use the term *joy*, I mean to imply *thirst*, and by my soul I am just now as thirsty as a hound after a three hours chace.

Gov. Come, then! Let us drink to the happiness of the young couple.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Tschulosnikoff has escaped from the guard.

Gov. Escaped! Blockhead! All Kamtschatka is a prison.

Iwan. The knout will fetch him back.

Gov.—*(To* Servant.*)*—Bring us a bottle of wine.

Iwan. What do you mean by ordering a single bottle? Bring us four. Zounds! Is not your daughter betrothed? Turn the sea into wine, and Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks, will drink it to the last drop.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *an open Place without the Citadel. A Balcony is visible, and under it a Stone-seat. It is Evening.*

Enter TSCHULOSNIKOFF *and* GRIGORI.

Tsch. He must pass this way.

Grig. Dear uncle, what is your intention?

Tsch. Give me your knife.

Grig. What do you mean———

Tsch. I mean to be revenged, and then to die.

Grig. Revenged! On whom?

Tsch. On Benyowsky.

Grig. What has he done to you?

Tsch. I shall be distracted, if I attempt to repeat it.

Grig. But consider the risk———

Tsch. The risk is nothing. I send him to hell, that I may find a servant ready to receive me.

Grig. Will you murder him?

Tsch. Give me the knife.

Grig. Well, if you——

Tsch. The knife, I say!

Grig. There it is.

Tsch. Is it sharp?—Ay—not amiss.

Grig. But for Heaven's sake———

Tsch. Go to church and pray—or go to the devil. I don't want you.

Grig. I will not leave you.

Tsch. Then stay; and give the villain absolution when he dies.

Grig. It grows darker.

Tsch. So much the better.

Grig. I saw six sentinels in search of you.

Tsch. Let them continue their search.—Ha! Ha! Ha! They shall find me, but not till this knife has found the way to Benyowsky's heart.

Grig. I have just heard that he is declared free——

Tsch. Is he?—Ha! Ha! Ha!

Grig. And is to marry the Governor's daughter.

Tsch. Is he?—Ha! Ha! Ha!

Grig. The nuptials are perhaps celebrated this very evening—and you may wait here in vain till sun-rise.

Tsch. Then I'll wait till the sun is burnt to a cinder. Hist! I hear footsteps. Creep close to the wall.

Grig. Dear uncle———

Tsch. Go, or I'll plunge the knife into your heart.

[*They separate.*

Enter BENYOWSKY *in deep meditation.*

Ben.—*(Slowly walking forward.)*——Athanasia!—Emilia!

Tsch. 'Tis he.—*(Rushes against* Benyowsky.*)*—Die, traitor!

Ben.—*(Turns suddenly, and seizes his arm. They wrestle.)*—Help! Murder!

Tsch. Grigori! Help!

(Grigori *attacks* Benyowsky *from behind. At the very moment appears* Kasarinoff *leading his two* Children. *He leaves them, fells* Tschulosnikoff *to the earth, and disarms him.* Benyowsky, *in the mean time, disarms* Grigori, *and holds him fast.* Tschulosnikoff *raves, shouts and curses.* Theodora *appears on the balcony, mixes her shrieks with the various cries of the combatants, and runs back.*)

Enter a CORPORAL *and* SOLDIERS.

Cor. Holla! Stand, I command you, in the name of the Governor. Ha! Tschulosnikoff! Have we found you again?

Kas. He was attempting to murder the Count.

Ben.—*(Releasing* Grigori.*)*—Fly, young man. You shall not be punished on my account. [Grigori *escapes.*

Cor. Come, Tschulosnikoff. You will have a comfortable share of the knout.

Tsch. Hell and furies!—*(Spits towards* Benyowsky.) God damn thee! [*Exit, guarded.*

Ben.—*(Embraces his preserver.)*—Kasarinoff!

Kas. "Go, and be my friend," said you to me. You see I have been so.

Ben. You have honestly paid your debt.

Kas. Here are my little ones. I meant that they should embrace your knees, and thank you. But Heaven has decreed I should have a better opportunity of expressing my gratitude.

Ben. Kasarinoff! My *friend!* This title, when bestowed on any one by me, is not the coin in common circulation, with which a labourer is paid for his work. Farewell!

Kas. It is dark, and you are alone. Let me attend you.

Ben. To the river, if you like.

Kas. To death.

[*Exeunt, arm in arm, each leading one of the* Children.

Enter IWAN *from the opposite side.*

Iwan.—*(Reeling.)*—Holla! Holla!—Checkmate!—What does all this hurlyburly mean? Who makes all this noise?—*(Looking round.)*—Nobody? Nobody makes all this noise. When I use the term *nobody*, I mean to imply *many people*, who are all gone.—Zounds! how every thing dances!—But I heard Theodora. Why did she shriek and squall? Why did she disturb me, when I was so comfortable? Five glasses from the bottle—and five moves on the board, would have mated both the Governor and Iwan Fedrowitsch, captain of the Cossacks. Ha! Ha! Ha!—*(Sinks upon the stone seat.)*—There!—Zounds! This is a cool seat. When I use the term *cool*, I mean to imply *cold*. How is this? The King of California is check-mated.—Ha! Ha! Ha!

[*Mutters a few more unintelligible words.*

Enter KUDRIN, *with a balalaika under his arm. He looks carefully round, but does not perceive* Iwan.

Kudrin. At length all is quiet here—and dark as the grave. The stars are gone to rest, and have wrapt themselves in snow-clouds.—*(Approaches the balcony.)*—Hist! Hist! Theodora! She is not on the balcony yet—or perhaps has already been there. Well! I must lure my bird.—*(Tunes his balalaika.)*—But my fingers are benumbed.—*(Breathes into his hands.)*—Well! Well! I shall succeed at last. The breath of a lover can melt a mountain of snow, or dissolve a diamond.

(He plays and sings the following words to an air in a Russian Opera, called Melnik.*)*

1.

Darkness o'er the fortress hovers;
Hasten from thy room.
'Tis the time when ghosts and lovers
Wander through the gloom.

2.

'Tis thy faithful Kudrin lingers,
Come without alarm.
Stiff and frozen are his fingers,
But his heart is warm.

3.

Long 'twill be ere gay Aurora
Chaces night away.
But the eyes of Theodora
Change the night to day.

4.

When thou com'st, no darkness hovers;
Haste then from thy room;
'Tis the time when ghosts and lovers
Wander through the gloom.

(During the last strophe Theodora *appears on the balcony.)*

Theo. Hist!

Kudrin. Hist!

Theo. Are you there?

Kudrin. I am, and have been some time.

Theo. Dear Kudrin, there are great rejoicings in the house.

Kudrin So much the better.

Theo. Athanasia is soon to be married.

Kudrin. To whom?

Theo. To Count Benyowsky.

Kudrin. Benyowsky!

Theo. Now, we shall be happy too.

Kudrin. We are all to fly across the sea, then?

Theo. Simpleton! I said nothing about flying.

Kudrin. What then?

Theo. Marrying.

Kudrin. You don't know, then, and your mistress does not know———

Theo. What don't we know?

Kudrin. And yet she is soon to be married? That's curious enough.

Theo. Tell me what you mean.

Kudrin. I would if I durst.

Theo. Why dare you not?

Kudrin. I have taken a dreadful oath———

Theo. Concerning what?

Kudrin. Concerning—can you be silent?

Theo. As the grave.

Kudrin. Listen then. I came nither, Theodora, for the purpose of prevailing upon you———

Theo. To do what?

Kudrin. To accompany us in our flight.

Theo. What flight?

Kudrin. If you betray me, we are all undone.

Theo. Simpleton! Love and treachery never dwell under the same roof.

Kudrin. There are many of us—many free men as well as exiles. Count Benyowsky is at our head. We have secured a vessel, and we are about to fly God knows whither, but to a delightful country.

Theo. Are you asleep?

Kudrin. Not I. All I tell you is true, and will soon take place. Will you go with me, dear Theodora?

Theo. But my mistress——

Kudrin. If the Count be married to her, he will, of course, take her with him.

Theo. Incomprehensible man!

Kudrin. Don't mind that. Pack up your clothes, and make yourself ready to accompany us.

Theo. But the Governor——

Kudrin. He may play at chess with that old fool our captain.

Iwan.—*(Springs up, and seizes* Kudrin.*)*—Traitor!

*(*Theodora *shrieks, and runs away.)*

Kudrin.—*(Sinks on his knees.)*—Mercy!—*(Trembling.)*—We are lost.

Iwan.—*(Holding him.)*—Villain! What have you been saying?

Kudrin. Oh, I am drunk. I don't know what I say.

Iwan. Treachery! Benyowsky! My Californian minister!

Kudrin. Some Kamtschadales have made me drink Muchomor—my head is quite confused.

Iwan. Come with me. [*Dragging him away.*

Kudrin. Let me be at liberty till morning I beseech you.

Iwan. Come with me, scoundrel.

Kudrin.—*(Pushes him very violently, and almost knocks him down.)*—Go to the devil. [*Exit.*

Iwan. What! This to me! This to his captain! Holla! Guard! Ship! Intrigue! Escape! Treachery!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Room.*

CRUSTIEW, BATURIN, *and several* CONSPIRATORS *are discovered. Some of them form groups, while others walk up and down with signs of uneasiness.*

1 *Con.* He does not return.

2 *Con.* It is already dark.

Crus. Be at ease. He will come, most certainly.

3 *Con.* Tschulosnikoff is rash.

Crus. Benyowsky bold.

1 *Con.* The governor rigid.

Crus. But not suspicious.

2 *Con.* He will be so.

Crus. Even if he be, the hour of deliverance is at hand.

1 *Con.* Ten years have I sighed for it.

2 *Con.* I, seven years.

3 *Con.* I, seventeen.

Crus. I, two-and-twenty. Picture to yourselves, my brethren, the delightful moment when we reach some land of liberty, where no snow forbids that we should kiss the earth, and where the fertile soil imbibes our tears of joy. Blest, blest be our deliverer!

All. Blest be he!

Enter STEPANOFF *hastily.*

Step. We are lost.

All. What now?

Step. Betrayed.

All. Betrayed!

Step. Your hero Benyowsky has treacherously gained his own freedom.

All. How so? Go on. Tell us.

Step. The Governor bestows his daughter in marriage on the Count.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Well?

Step. Well! Blockheads! He has consequently betrayed us.

Crus. That *consequently* is not clear to me.

Step. Indeed! Why is he free? This is never granted but for some great service to the state, and what other can be in his power than the service of treachery? Talk he can. He has caught us with his tongue, as a woodpecker catches bees. First, he infatuated that old man, —*(pointing at* Crustiew,*)*—then that old man infatuated us. With Russian blood this hero pays for his freedom. With Russian blood he besprinkles the bridal couch. To-day he sees us led to execution, and to-morrow he celebrates his nuptials. Vengeance, vengeance on the traitor!

All. Vengeance! Vengeance!

Step. We must die; but let Benyowsky die before us.

All. He shall, he shall.

Crus. Be not so rash, my comrades.

Step. What punishment did we swear to inflict upon the perjured?

All. Death! Death!

Crus. Die he shall, if he be guilty. I myself, old as I am, will rouse the remnant of my strength to plunge a dagger in his heart. But he must be heard. If *that* man be a hypocrite, if *that* eye deceived me, adieu to all belief in honour and fidelity. *I* think him innocent. Hear him you must.

Step. Speak, then, old prater. Defend him.

Crus. 'Tis not I, but he himself, who must speak. *Him* you must hear.

Step. Him, forsooth! Are you such a blockhead as to think that he will dare to appear again among us?

Enter BENYOWSKY.

Crus. There he is.

Step. Ha!—*(Drawing his sword.)*—Down with him!

All.—*(Draw their swords.)*—Down with the traitor!

Crus.—*(Rushing between them and* Benyowsky.)—Then let your swords find the way to his heart through mine. Back, comrades! He is in your power. You must hear him. He cannot escape you.

Bat. Crustiew is right. Guard the door.

Ben. Let me advance, Crustiew. What do you want?

Step. Thy blood.

Ben. Have I not devoted it to your deliverance? Am I not a member of your body?

Step. Rather say, an ulcer of our body. Defend thyself.

Ben. Against what charge?

Step. Art thou free?

Ben. I am.

Step. Is the Governor about to bestow his daughter's hand upon thee?

Ben. He is.

Step. Now, comrades, have I not told the truth? What further evidence is necessary? Revenge! Revenge!

All.—*(Brandish their swords.)*—Revenge! Revenge!

Crus. Hold! Benyowsky, you perceive we do not understand your conduct. Explain the enigma.

Ben. I conceive your meaning. Think you that I should appear among you with so much calmness and composure, if I were what this villain wishes me to seem? Look in my face: Does treachery appear in my

eye? Do you perceive the horrors of a guilty conscience in my features?

Step. Mean, paltry prattle!

Ben. Mean, paltry prater! Hear me, my brethren, and then decide. I went to the Governor—for what reason you know. His daughter loves me: he loves his daughter. It was very natural that she should beg my liberty, and as natural that her father should grant it. He embraced me as his son-in-law. What could I do in such a case? Had I declined the honour, I must have given reasons for such conduct. And what reasons? Was not dissimulation absolutely necessary? Cannot my freedom be a double advantage to you?

Step. Thou liest.

Ben. Thee I despise. Brethren, I stand in the midst of you unarmed and defenceless. If I have betrayed you, the sentinels will, in a few minutes, surround our village. Then dispatch me to that hell, which I should deserve, if I were guilty of a crime so monstrous.

Crus. He is innocent.

All. He is. [*Returning their swords into the scabbards.*

Step.—(*With ferocious fury.*)—Thou crafty and deceitful villain, is it thy lot to be triumphant upon all occasions? Take a sword. I challenge thee to single combat. Be God the judge between me and thee. If thy conscience be pure, come on.

Ben. Give me a sword.

Crus. That must not be. Your life is valuable to us. Stepanoff is tortured by jealousy.

Step. Benyowsky is nothing but a mouthing hero.

Ben.—(*Incensed.*)—Give me a sword.

Bat.—(*Steps between them.*)—Hold! I can no longer be silent.—(*Pointing to* Stepanoff.)—That is the traitor.

[Stepanoff *starts.*

All. How! What means this?

Bat.—(*To* Stepanoff.)—Look stedfastly at me—eye to eye.

Step.—(*Embarrassed.*)—What do you want with me?

Bat. See how his glowing cheek acknowledges the crime. His blood is more sincere than his tongue. What do I want with you! I will declare what you lately wanted of me.

All. Speak! Speak!

Bat. But a few hours since, my brethren———

Step. Believe him not: he lies.

Bat. He came enraged to my hut——

Step. Blockhead, I was drunk.

Bat. Uttered curses on Benyowsky——

Step. Men curse—old women pray.

Bat. Wrote a treacherous letter——

Step.—(*Scornfully.*)—Did you read it?

Bat. I know its contents from your lips.

Step. Blockhead, I was amusing myself with your ignorance.

Bat. I was to deliver the letter.

Step. You dreamt this.

Bat. It was pregnant with the destruction of Benyowsky and of our hopes.

All. Proceed! Proceed!

Bat. I refused—he alternately threatened and intreated, till at length he threw a piece of money on the table, as payment for my silence.

Step. Is this story almost at an end?

Bat. He then rushed out, and I have not seen him again till now.

All. Traitor! Villain!

Step. He lies.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.*——(*Drawing their swords.*)—Down with him!

Ben. Hold! Disarm and bind him, but he must also be heard.

(*The* Conspirators *take away* Stepanoff's *sword, and, in spite of his resistance, bind his hands.*)

All. The letter! Where is the letter?

Ben. Stepanoff, you hear the question of your confederates. Answer.

Step.—(*With sullenness and effrontery.*)—I know of no letter.

Ben. Confess, or tremble.

Step.—(*With a look of contempt.*)—Tremble at thy threats!

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Down with him!

Ben. Hold! Lead him away, and guard him in the adjoining room.

Step.—(*Gnashing his teeth as he is conducted away.*)—Will no devil rise from hell to aid me? [*Exit.*

Ben. Be composed, my brethren. Murder is committed in a moment, and the rash act is often followed by the penitence of many years. Though Baturin's evidence may be upright, you are still in want of Stepanoff's confession.

Bat. I swear that what I have asserted is true. May this hand wither if my testimony be false!

Ben. This is not sufficient. Did you read the letter?

Bat. No.

Ben. Proceed with mildness, I beseech you, brethren. Pardon conferred upon an enemy is a seed which often produces a rich crop. Let us be satisfied with terrifying him, by which we may, perhaps, extort a penitent avowal of his guilt.

Crus. Generous man, be you his judge, and act as seems right to you.

Ben. Are you satisfied with this?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* We are.

Ben. 'Tis well. Bring me a cup of water.—(*He is obeyed, and places the cup on a table.*)—I know Stepanoff's disorder. I alone can be his physician. Conduct him hither.

Enter STEPANOFF, *guarded.*

Come nearer, Stepanoff. You are convicted of treachery. You, as well as all assembled here, swore that death should be the lot of every traitor. Pass sentence on yourself.

Step. My fate is in the hands of my enemy.

Ben. You are mistaken. All your brethren have condemned you. Confess.

Step. I will not.

Ben. You have but few moments to live. Confess.

Step. I will not.

Ben. You hate me?

Step. From my soul.

Ben. What have I done to you?

Step. Nothing.

Ben. And yet you hate me?

Step. Yes.

Ben. And you will not confess?

Step. No.

Ben. Enough! Silence is confession. This cup contains poison. Drink it to the last drop.

Step.—(*Looking boldly round.*)—Brethren, is this your determination?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Most positively.

Step. You will sacrifice me to this stranger?

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Drink! Drink!

Step. Think you that death is a spectre, and I a child alarmed by it? I will drink; but first a word to thee, Benyowsky. I hate thee. I abhor thee. I have sought

thy death, but not the death of these men. Thou dost well in removing me. Thou dost well in binding these hands; for were they free, by the Almighty, the first use of their liberty should be to plunge a knife into thy heart.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Dispatch him!

Ben. Hold! What have *you* to do with his fate? Me alone has he injured, and me alone have you appointed his judge. Release him. I pardon him.

Step. 'Tis in vain, Count Benyowsky. Thy accursed generosity is thrown away upon me. I hate thee. We cannot stand near each other. One of us must fall. Let me, therefore, die.

Ben. Unbind his hands.—(*It is done.*)—You are free.

Step. Am I? Give me, then, a sword, that I may stab the man I hate.—(*Attempts to snatch a sword from one of the* Conspirators, *but is prevented.*)

Crus. Madman!

Ben. Leave him to me. Stepanoff, I know the worm which preys upon your heart.—(*Draws him aside.*)—Look! This is the picture of my wife.

Step. Your wife!

Ben. I am married.

Step. Married!

Ben. I am a father.

Step. A father!

Ben. And I love my wife.

Step. Oh, God!

Ben. I cannot, therefore, accept the hand of Athanasia.

Step.—(*Is violently agitated, bursts into tears, and embraces the* Count.)—Benyowsky! I must away into the open air. [*Rushes out.*

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Do you allow him to go?

Ben. Be at ease. He is our's.

1, 2, & 3 *Con.* Strange! Incomprehensible!

Ben. Very natural. A silken thread can lead the most headstrong, if we but know *where* this thread is tied.

Enter WASILI, *hastily.*

Wasili. Athanasia is come hither on foot, and quite alone. She desires to speak with you.

Ben. Athanasia! What means this? Withdraw, my brethren, through the back-door.

[*Exeunt all the* Conspirators.

At night—alone—on foot!—So bashful—and yet so bold!—This forebodes no good.

Enter ATHANASIA.

Athan.—*(Flies breathless into his arms.)*—Oh! I can no more———

Ben.—*(Places her in a chair.)*—What is the matter? Why———

Athan. I have ran—I have flown———

Ben. For what reason?

Athan. My footsteps will not be visible in the snow.

Ben. For Heaven's sake———

Athan. Feel how my heart beats.

[*She lays his hand upon her bosom.*

Ben. Compose yourself.

Athan. Yes—I am better already—I feel easier—for I behold you again—and my terrors vanish.

Ben. Without a cloak when it is so cold!

Athan. I am without a cloak, but indeed—I am warm—very warm.

Ben. Does your father know——

Athan. No one knows but myself. The moments were precious.

Ben. Explain to me——

Athan. I will—I will—*(drawing her breath with difficulty.)*—Oh!—Patience!—Oh!—Now it is over.

Ben. You alarm me.

Athan. No, no. You are here—and all is well again. I was a child——

Ben. This enigma——

Athan.—*(Rises, approaches him, seizes both his hands, and gazes at him with a keen but affectionate look.)*—Benyowsky!

Ben. Why this penetrating look?

Athan.—*(After a pause.)*—No, it is false. He deceived me.

Ben. Who?

Athan. Laugh at me, dear Count, for I am a credulous simpleton. My attendant—she has a lover. Lovers, I have heard, like to play each other a trick. He made her believe—but you must not be angry.

Ben. Proceed.

Athan. I was alarmed, and, without reflection, ran hither. Scold me—laugh at me—I deserve it.

Ben. You make me impatient.

Athan. Indeed, dear Count, I am easy now—quite easy. When I look at you, I am ashamed to confess the cause of my alarm—but I must. Let me rest my face upon your bosom, that I may speak more freely. It is said—that you are at the head of a conspiracy—that you want to escape—to reward my father's kindness with ingratitude—to forsake me.—*(She quits her bashful attitude.)*—There! Now you know all; but don't speak—don't make me feel ashamed by defending yourself. You shall not even say *no.*

Ben.—*(Extremely agitated.)*—Athanasia!

Athan. Not a word—not a syllable! I would beat any one, who thought it worth while to defend you.

Ben. I must——

Athan. Be silent, or I'll put my hand upon your mouth. Away with those wrinkles! Laugh, laugh at your silly childish Athanasia. Give me a kiss of reconciliation, and I shall run joyfully back to the citadel.

Ben. This is too much. Who could impose upon such an angel? Lovely, unsuspecting creature—you have not been deceived.

Athan. How!

Ben. I must fly.

Athan. Fly!

Ben. Perhaps even to-morrow.

Athan. Merciful Heavens!

Ben. I am bound by a dreadful oath.

Athan. Poor Athanasia!

Ben. I have sworn to my companions in adversity that I will conquer or die.

Athan. Poor deluded Athanasia!

Ben. Perjury is to be punished with death.

Athan.—(Wringing her hands.)—Death, death to me!

Ben. I cannot retreat—I dare not look around me. My heart bleeds—but I must proceed.

Athan. All is lost.

Ben. I will break this chain. My corpse alone shall be a slave. I hazard much by this confession, but I could not impose upon your unsuspecting heart. Now I am in your power. Go—discover to your father what you have heard——

Athan.—(Weeping.)—Benyowsky, I have not deserved this suspicion. Though you do not love me, yet shall you, when you are enjoying happiness in a distant part of the world, never think of Athanasia but with regret. My spirit, ever attendant on you, shall often force from your heart the confession that Athanasia was not an ignoble being.

Ben. Alas! to part with you is the only difficulty which my heart has to encounter.

Athan. I shall die. I have lived but a moment—for we do not live until we love. Blessed spirit of my mother, receive me in thy maternal arms.

Ben.—*(Deeply affected.)*—Be generous, Athanasia. Spare me.

Athan. You are agitated. Dear Count, remain with me. Dear Benyowsky, remain with me. I am sure you never can be happy when you think of my distress. My pallid image will disfigure every picture of happiness. Remain with us. Are you not already free? The warmth of my affection shall make sweet flowers grow in these cold deserts. The strength of my affection shall contend with your anxiety to revisit the land which gave you birth. I will learn every thing from you, and you shall learn from me to love.

Ben. You torture me——

Athan. I do not complain—I do not weep. Your heart must decide—What, therefore, can I fear? Confidence is the coin with which a noble soul is bought. I place confidence in you—and you will not forsake me.

Ben. My confederates will murder me.

Athan. Come with me. The power of my father, and the arm of affection, will protect you.

Ben. Shall I perfidiously sacrifice my friends?

Athan. I will embrace my father's knees, and they shall not be injured. Were their condemnation written in blood, my tears should wash away the words.

Ben. I cannot——

Athan. You can—and will. What can you be in search of? Liberty? Has not love already broken your fetters? Treasures? Will you not be my father's heir? Affection? Oh! you will find it no where as it glows within this faithful bosom. Thou first sole object of

my wishes, wilt thou load thy vessel with my father's curse? Wilt thou in every zephyr hear my sighs? Alas! and yet—if the weather were tempestuous, I should kneel on the shore, and pray for thy safety.

Ben. Cease, cease! I love you—by the Almighty, I love you, but——

Athan. Can love use such a word as *but?*

Ben. I cannot deceive you.

Athan. You will not, I am sure.

Ben. You must know all.

Athan. Still more?

Ben. Look at this picture. This is—my wife.

Athan. Ha!—*(She sinks devoid of strength into a chair.* Benyowsky *leans against the wall, and hides his face. A long pause ensues.* Athanasia's *bosom heaves, and she appears to be contending with herself. At length she rises with a resolute air.)*—Enough! I resign you.—*(Offering her hand.)*—May I call you my brother?—*(*Benyowsky *falls at her feet, and presses his face to her hand.)*—Fly! If your wife loves you, (oh, she must love you,) how anxious and miserable she must be! Hasten! Fly!

Ben.—*(Starting up.)*—God of Heaven! Emilia!

Athan. Is Emilia her name? It is a mild and gentle name. Oh, doubtless, your Emilia is mild and good. She will not deny me your fraternal love——

Ben. Would that at this instant I could rush to battle!

Athan. Pure and guiltless is my love for you—it is the affection of a sister towards a brother. No, I will not forsake you—I cannot forsake you. I will go with you into the wide world. I will witness the delight of your Emilia at your return. A beam of joy again warms my heart. I myself will conduct you to her arms. I will find my peace in your's—assist your wife in conducting your household—teach your babes to lisp your name—

Ben. Girl, you rob me of my senses.

Athan. No mean jealousy shall creep among us. No busy neighbour shall disturb our happy harmony. My sincerity shall gain your wife's affection—my innocence and virtue her respect. All I ask is to be always with you, to see how you act, to hear what you say, to rejoice and grieve with you. Do not dissipate the pleasing vision. Do not cast me from you. Give me a little spot in your cabin, that I may see you; a corner in your vessel, that I may pray for you.

Ben. And what is to become of your aged father?

Athan.—*(Covering her face.)*—Oh, God!

Enter a CONSPIRATOR.

Con. The Governor wishes to see you.

Ben. To-morrow early I——

Con. Directly.

Ben. At so unusual an hour! What can this mean?

Con. The servant says there is a dreadful commotion in the castle.

Ben. I will come. [*Exit* Conspirator.

Athan. Never. Benyowsky, I tremble——

Ben. Why?

Athan. Did you not hear? A dreadful commotion! Oh, when my father causes a commotion, he is not instigated by a trifle. He has sent for you at this late hour. To obey him would be rash in the extreme. Let me return alone; and if I suspect any danger, of which I cannot apprize you by a note, Theodora shall bring you a red riband. Soon as you see that, think of some means to save yourself.

Ben. Who knows whether we do not magnify an insect till we fancy it an elephant? Your father has, perhaps, missed you, and is uneasy.

Athan. That is possible.

Ben. I'll go with you.

Athan. No, no. My terror would betray you.

Ben. Consider, dear Athanasia——

Athan. Affection cannot consider—it only feels.

Ben. If we be already discovered, escape is impossible; for our preparations are not sufficiently forwarded. Anxiety does but augment the evil. Lightning more easily finds its way to the traveller, who seeks shelter under a tree, than to him who is in the open field. Therefore let us go.

Athan. I am not sure I can. My knees tremble.

Ben. Lean on my arm. [*Going.*

Enter KUDRIN.

Kudrin.——(*Falls at* Benyowsky's *feet.*)——Kill me, Count Benyowsky, kill me.

Ben. Man, what is the matter?

Kudrin. I have betrayed you.

Ben. Betrayed!

Kudrin. Love made me a traitor.

Ben. Instantly relate what has happened.

Kudrin. I love Theodora, and wished to take her with me. A few hours since, she was standing on the balcony. Trusting to deceitful darkness, I discovered all to her, and was overheard.

Ben. Overheard! By whom?

Kudrin. The captain of our Cossacks.

Ben. By him alone?

Kudrin. Yes.

Ben. And he discovered you?

Kudrin. Yes, he seized me, and called to the guard; but I forced him back, and escaped. My conscience has tormented me throughout the night, and the blood of my brethren demands revenge. Pardon me, and kill me.

Ben. Are you certain that no one but Iwan Fedrowitsch overheard you?

Kudrin. I am.

Ben.—*(To* Athanasia.*)*—And is Theodora's fidelity to be relied on?

Athan. I am surety for her.

Ben. Rise, then, and go in peace. Creep cautiously to the vessel, and conceal yourself in it. To-morrow you shall hear from us.

Kudrin.—*(Rising.)*—How! Not an angry word!

Ben. Words employ time, and deeds alone can save us. Instantly obey my command, and do not suffer yourself to be caught a second time.

Kudrin. An unburdened conscience accelerates my steps. [*Exit.*

Ben. Now, Athanasia, come to your father.

Athan. Notwithstanding———

Ben. Certainly. Nothing but firmness and effrontery can invalidate the testimony of Iwan. If I but succeed in lulling your father's suspicions to rest till to-morrow morning, our game is won.

Athan But if you fail——

Ben. Why, then our game is lost.

Athan. And then?

Ben. I shall know how to die.

Athan. Oh, Benyowsky! [*Exeunt arm-in-arm.*

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Citadel.*

The GOVERNOR *is discovered walking uneasily up and down.* IWAN *stands at the other Side of the Room.*

Gov. Are you sure you heard all that you describe?

Iwan. Have I ears? When I use the term *ears*, I mean to imply *large ears.*

Gov. Incomprehensible!

Iwan. He called me an old fool.

Gov. In return for all my kindness——

Iwan. He struck me on the breast.

Gov. I bestowed my only daughter on the hypocrite.

Iwan. We must have a knout made of thunderbolts.

Gov. No. It cannot be. The deed is of too black a nature. Iwan, confess that you were drunk.

Iwan. Drunk! Why, yes. Is not one drunken captain better than ten sober exiles?

Gov. Grant me composure, Heaven, that, true to my dignity, I may not proceed too rashly. Law and equity ought to be the judges. The warmth of my temperament shall not influence the scales.

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. Count Benyowsky will come.

Gov. Will come!

Ser. Immediately.

Gov. Indeed! This is audacity or innocence. Has Theodora been found?

Ser. No.

Gov. Let a corporal and guard go in search of Kudria the Cossack, and bring him hither. [*Exit* Servant.

Iwan. Ay, ay, I'll pay you with interest, young man. Zounds! To call me an old fool! I am only sorry that the fellow is a Cossack.

Gov. My poor daughter!

Enter BENYOWSKY *and* ATHANASIA.

Ha! Count Benyowsky!

Iwan. Welcome, my minister!

Gov. What do *you* want, Athanasia? You come at an inconvenient time. Leave us, my daughter.

(Athanasia *goes away with a heavy heart.* Governor *stands lost in gloomy meditation.* Iwan *surveys* Benyowsky *with a smile of ignorance from head to foot, while* Benyowsky's *eyes are alternately turned towards each of them.* Governor rings.)

Enter a SERVANT.

Is Theodora not yet found?

Ser. She is just come from a neighbour's house.

Gov. Where is she?

Ser. With your Excellency's daughter.

Gov. Bring her hither instantly. [*Exit* Servant.

(*A pause ensues, during which the* Governor *rivets his eye on* Benyowsky, *who looks calmly in his face.*)

Gov.—*(Aside.)*—If he be guilty, he is not a common villain.

Ben. Your Excellency's countenance is not the same as it was yesterday and to-day.

Gov. Heaven grant that our hearts may remain unaltered!

Ben. Heaven grant it, say I too.

Gov. I am surety for mine.

Ben. Then I am at ease.

Gov. I am glad to hear it.

Ben. You have summoned me——

Gov. Be patient.

Iwan. Very pretty things are talked of here.

Ben. How so?

Iwan. When I use the term *pretty things*, I mean to imply *high treason*.

Ben. Has Tschulosnikoff again——

Iwan. Tschulosnikoff has nothing to do with it. He is safely confined.

Ben. A new calumniator, then, it seems.—Who is he?

Gov. He shall appear before you.

Ben. That I expect.

Gov. The most rigid justice——

Ben. That I demand.

Gov. He shall confess openly.

Ben. And prove his accusation.

Gov. Of course.

Ben. And if he cannot prove it.

Gov. He shall be severely punished.

Ben. I am satisfied.

Gov.—*(After a pause.)*—But if he can prove his accusation——

Ben. Then I will lay my head at your feet.

Gov.—*(Keenly looking at him.)*—Count, I hope you are innocent.

Ben. I know I am.

Gov. Beloved and free as you are, what could induce you——

Ben. Therefore——

Gov. You are right. Iwan Fedrowitsch, I fear you have needlessly caused me a most uneasy hour.

Iwan. Needlessly! Did he not call me an old fool?

Ben. Who?

Gov. That is of no consequence.

Iwan. The devil it is not.

Enter THEODORA.

Gov. Come nearer, Theodora. Do you know Kudrin the Cossack?

Theo. Certainly. He is in love with me, and I with him.

Iwan. There we have it.

Gov. Have you seen him to-day?

Theo. Yes.

Gov. Where?

Theo. Under the balcony.

Gov. On what subject did he talk to you?

Theo. On the constant subject of our conversations—love.

Gov. That I don't want to know.

Theo. What then?

Gov. He discovered a conspiracy to you.

Theo. Conspiracy! What is that?

Iwan. Did he not ask you to run away with him

Theo. Run away! Yes, he did.

Gov. To what place?

Theo. Oh!

Iwan. Now! Was I right, or not?

Gov. Speak.

Theo. Oh, forgive, forgive my poor Kudrin.

Gov. First confess.

Theo. Well—he complained of the captain's harsh treatment, and proposed that I should escape with him to Ochozk.

Gov. Nothing more?

Iwan. Pshaw! Did you not talk of a flight beyond the sea—Eh?

Theo. Yes, I said I would go with him all the world over.

Iwan. When I use the term *sea*, I do *not* mean to imply *all the world over.*

Theo. Well then, I said I would go across the sea with him, although I was very much afraid of water.

Ben.—*(Smiling aside.)*—Excellent!

Gov. Well, Iwan! How does this sound?

Iwan.—*(Shaking his head.)*—False every syllable! Did you not speak of a charming country, to which you would fly?

Theo. Yes, Ochozk. He has been there, and is always telling me how well the people live.

Gov. But the Count, the Count,

Theo. The Count!

Iwan. Yes, yes, the Count. Was not he to accompany you to Ochozk—Eh?

Theo. This is the first word I have heard of it. So much the better. I shall not be obliged to leave my lady, then.

Iwan. She affects stupidity.

Gov. Confess. What did you say relative to the Count?

Theo. Not a word. But yes—I recollect——

Iwan. Ay, ay.

Theo. I told him that Count Benyowsky was to marry my lady.

Gov. Nothing more?

Theo. What more could I tell him?

Iwan.—*(Impatiently.)*—You talked together about a conspiracy, a ship, and escape. Will you confess?

Theo. I beg your pardon, Iwan Fedrowitsch, but your faculties were rather clouded at that time, and I believe they are so still.

Iwan. You witch! Why, the slut will presently try to convince me that I was not called an old fool.

Theo.—*(Weeping, and affecting to be incensed.)*—I a witch and a slut!

Iwan. Well, well!

Theo. Let me tell you I am an honest woman——

Iwan. Well, well!

Theo. Educated with my lady——

Iwan. Well—yes.

Gov. Be pacified, Theodora. Have you concealed nothing from me?

Theo. But, good Heavens, there stands the Count himself. He must know best whether he thinks of travelling to Ochozk.

Ben. The Count, my dear girl, has no such intention; but there are so many people, who, after emptying a bottle, are kind enough to think for him——

Gov. Iwan, you were wrong. The wine and the air——

Iwan. As to the conspiracy, I may perhaps be mistaken; but as to the old fool, I am as positive——

Gov. Well, if that be all——

Iwan. All! Enough too, I think.

Gov. True, Iwan. We must let him feel the knout.

Iwan. Most certainly.

Gov. Thank Heaven no suspicion attaches to the man who is so dear to my heart. I believe it easily, and most willingly.

Ben. The enigma of the flight, as it is called, I probably can solve. The captain, here, mentioned to me a project respecting the Aleutian Islands: I happened to drop a few words on the subject, which Kudrin probably heard, and misinterpreted.

Iwan. Oh, that's another affair. When I use the term *another affair*, I mean to imply——

Theo. Nothing.

Iwan. Exactly. Nothing.

Gov.——*(Shaking hands with* Benyowsky.*)*——Dear Count, we are, I hope, on the same terms as heretofore.

Iwan.—*(Shaking hands with* Benyowsky.*)*—And we too, I hope.

Gov. Pardon my suspicions as the Governor: they never entered my mind as a father.

Ben. They have hurt me, but be they forgotten.

Gov. It is late. Shall we go to supper?

Iwan. A very rational idea.

Ben. I must beg to be excused. This has been a warm day to me. I am in want of rest.

Gov. Farewell, then, till to-morrow.

[*Exit* Benyowsky.

Iwan. What a strange whimsical man he is! He talks about a warm day, when it is so cold out of doors, that a man's teeth might freeze together.

Gov. Where is my daughter?

Theo. In the dining-room.

Gov. We will join her. But, Iwan, take heed that the wine does not again make your head so full of idle fancies——

Iwan. Wine! The very idea is a feast. Have at it! Ha! Ha! Ha! [*They are going.*

Enter a SERVANT.

Ser. A letter for your Excellency.

Gov. Who brought it?

Ser. A Kamtschadale. [Governor *opens it.*

Iwan. I hate letters.

Theo. Why?

Iwan. Because one is obliged to read them.

Gov. What! Again! Listen, Iwan.—*(Reads.)*—"Count Benyowsky is at the head of more than a hundred determined men. Tschulosnikoff's vessel is in their power. At the dawn of day the Governor will be robbed of his daughter. My life is surety for the truth of this intelligence, and my liberty is due from the state.

"Stepanoff."

Iwan. There we have it! What say you now, Governor? Was he drunk too, who wrote this letter?

Gov. Ha!—Was I then deceived?—Is the Count already gone?

Ser. He seemed to be in haste.

Gov. In haste! No doubt he was.—*(To* Theodora.*)*—Bring my daughter hither.

Theo.—*(As she goes.)*—Another tempest threatens us. [*Exit.*

Iwan. I'll order my Cossacks to be mounted, and in readiness.

Gov. How he stood! How innocent were his looks! How calmly he offered me his head!

Iwan. One head we must have at all events—his, or Stepanoff's.

Enter ATHANASIA *and* THEODORA.

Gov.—(*Presenting the letter to* Athanasia.)—Read that letter.

Athan.—(*After having perused it.*)—Calumny, dear father.

Gov. Do you know nothing?

Athan. Nothing.

Gov. But you turn pale?

Athan. Vexation and disgust, anger and affection——

Gov. But you tremble?

Athan. Must I not tremble, lest my father, by acting too hastily————

Gov. Be easy. I shall scrutinize minutely, before I proceed further.

Athan. I am sorry to be the cause of making any man miserable; but this Stepanoff deserves to be so. To me it is evident why he wishes the Count's destruction. His jealousy is inventive.

Gov. Jealousy!

Athan. He loves me.

Gov. You!

Athan. With a sort of desperation. Even this morning he dared to surprise me here in the fortress, and to use such language as I thought nothing but madness could dictate.

Gov. He! To my daughter?

Athan. I was about to call for aid, when the Count suddenly entered the room. With violent threats Stepanoff left us—and he has kept his promise.

Gov. I am astonished.

Athan. Jealousy dictated this letter. Judge, then, my father, whether it ought to disturb you.

Gov. Why did you not immediately tell me——

Athan. I pitied him, for I thought him insane.

Theo.—*(Aside.)*—Admirable! The storm will pass away without doing harm.

Iwan. Hem! Wrong again! What a day is this—No eating or drinking! What a night is this, too—No sleep or rest!

Gov.—*(After a moment's reflection.)*—Can Stepanoff have dared to fabricate this falsehood?—Tschulosnikoff! Kudrin!—Can all this have happened by accident?

Enter KUDRIN *in chains, guarded by a* Corporal *and* Soldiers.

Iwan. Ha! the bird is caught.

Cor. Had we been a minute or two later, he would have escaped us.

Theo.—*(To* Athanasia.*)*—We are lost.

Athan. Give him a hint.

Gov. Where did you find him?

Cor. At the haven.

Gov. Are any preparations making there?

Cor. Yes. Tschulosnikoff's vessel is preparing for sea.

Gov.—*(To* Kudrin.*)*—What were you doing at the haven?

Kudrin.—*(Trembling.)*—Mercy! Mercy! I'll confess all.

Theo.—*(Forcing her way to him.)*—I have already confessed all, dear Kudrin.

Iwan. Do you know who I am—Eh?

Kudrin. You are my gracious captain.

Iwan. I am your old fool, and consequently your ungracious captain. When I use the term *ungracious*, I mean to imply the *knout*.

Kudrin. Mercy! Spare me for the sake of my youth. I have been misled.

Gov. Who misled you?

Theo. I persuaded him———

Gov. Peace!

Theo.—(*Aside.*)—Fortune aid us!

Athan.—(*Aside.*)—We are lost!

Gov.—(*To* Kudrin.)—You wanted to fly from hence.

Kudrin. Yes.

Gov. To what place?

Theo. Haven't you relations at Ochozk?

Kudrin. No.

Theo. But friends and acquaintance?

Kudrin. I never was there in my life.

Gov.—(*To* Theodora.)—Peace!

Theo. Gracious Sir, I must speak for him. Terror has robbed him of his senses, and he will forfeit his life.

Iwan. So much the better.

Gov. Name your confederates.

Theo. Who but I———

Gov. Will you be silent?

Kudrin. Count Benyowsky———

Theo. Gave you good advice, I know, and you ought to have followed it.

Gov. Girl, I'll have you locked in your room.

Theo. But good Heavens, your Excellency should consider we are attached to each other, and his affection for me has brought him into his present unfortunate situation. Do you hear, Kudrin? I besought him to fly with me to Ochozk—His affection for me made him consent—that's all. Spare him—forgive him. He is the best balalaika-player in all the country.

Gov. Begone to your chamber.

Theo. Oh, my lady, say a kind word in behalf of my poor———

Gov. Out of the room with her!

Athan. Go, Theodora.

Theo. Well, if I must, I will go. Kudrin, you have heard what I have said. I take all the blame upon myself. No one but myself knew any thing of the matter.

[*Exit.*

Iwan. Am I nobody, then—Eh?

Gov. Now make a frank confession; for nothing but the truth can procure your pardon.

Kudrin. Oh, if my comrades must die, I had rather not live.

Gov. Are there many of you?

Kudrin. Yes.

Gov. Who is your leader?

Kudrin. Count Benyowsky.

Gov. Where did you enter into a confederacy?

Kudrin. At the altar.

Gov. How did you mean to escape?

Kudrin. In a vessel.

Gov. When?

Kudrin. To-morrow.

Gov. Now, Athanasia?—(Athanasia *appears about to swoon.*)—Poor child! I pity you. We have cherished a viper in our bosoms.

Iwan. A dragon.

Gov. My heart can pardon every weakness, but ingratitude is a vice of the deepest dye. Lead him away. Your lives are answerable for his.

Iwan. Come, come! I'll appoint you quarters. Bread without sun, and water without air, will tame you, I dare say. You shall not call me an old fool again in a hurry.

[*Exeunt* Iwan, Kudrin *and* Guards.

Gov. There are crimes which rouse the soul, beget misanthropy, and convert inborn benevolence to cruelty. Dissembling villain! Thou hast played upon my heart, but thou shalt know me.

Athan.—(*Falls at his feet.*)—Mercy, my father! I love him still.

Gov. Shame on thee! Rise, and spare thy words, for they are a disgrace to thee and me. Hast thou forgotten that thy father's life and honour are at stake? Are they become indifferent to thee?

Athan. Oh, no! With my blood——

Gov. That I expect from my daughter. We must proceed without delay, for the danger is at hand. Sit down, and write.

Athan.—(*Alarmed.*)—What?

Gov. Benyowsky is the ring-leader. When we have him in our power, the rest will be useless members without a head. Write.

Athan.—(*Trembling.*)—What shall I write?

Gov. He will suspect his fate, and will refuse to obey my summons. You alone can entice him hither. Measure for measure. Write an affectionate note—invite him——

Athan. Never!

Gov. How! Would you——

Athan. I cannot, my father.

Gov. Ungrateful girl! Shall thy mother's blessing be counteracted by thy father's curse.

Athan. Hold, I beseech you.

Gov. Sit down, then, and write.

Athan.——(*Seats herself at the table.*)——His death-warrant?

Gov. It may be so.

Athan. Then is it mine to.

Gov. Immaterial!

Athan. I am ready.—(Governor *dictates, and she with a trembling hand writes his words.*)—" Dear Count, I must speak to you to-night. Come immediately. Theodora will admit you at the little gate. Fly into the arms of your affectionate Athanasia."
I have done.

Gov.—*(Reads what she has written.)*—It is scarcely legible, but it will answer its purpose. Seal it.—(Athanasia, *as she is sealing it, draws, unobserved by her father, a piece of red riband from her bosom, and puts it in the letter.)*—Paul!

Enter a SERVANT.

Take this note to Count Benyowsky, and say that Athanasia sent it. Do you hear?

Ser. I shall obey your Excellency's directions. [*Exit.*

Gov. Go to sleep, Athanasia. I will be your safeguard. Go, and in your prayers beseech the Almighty to root this passion from your breast. Think of your mother.—*(Much affected, and taking her hand.)*—Think of your old father. [*Exit.*

Athan. Father!—Mother!—Heaven forgive me! I think but of him.—To sleep! When Benyowsky is in danger!—Pray! Alas! That will not rescue him.—Away with female timidity! Unite with me, ye unknown friends, courage and resolution. A sword, a sword for this weak hand! Deliverance to the beloved of my soul! Be my breast his shield. At his side, and fighting in his defence, will Athanasia die.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE, CRUSTIEW'S *Hut.*

The CONSPIRATORS *are stretched asleep upon the Earth in Groups. Each has a Gun near him, and a Brace of Pistols in his Belt.* CRUSTIEW *sits on a Bench with his Eyes closed; but his uneasiness evinces that his attempts to sleep are ineffectual. At length he rises.*

Crus. I cannot sleep. Whether I turn my head this way or that, I hear a pulse. My blood courses through my veins. A voice seems every moment to shout in my ear, to-morrow, to-morrow thou wilt be dead or free. The clear warm sun of liberty dispels the cold shadows of the night. To-morrow is my birth-day. To-morrow I again begin to live—in this world or another. Farewell, thou gloomy abode of misery. Unwillingly I leave thee, for custom bestows charms even on a prison. Every spider is become dear to me—every mouse is my friend. The world too is but a prison, to which custom binds us. In this we are at home; in another we are unknown, and it is unpleasant to be transported into the society of strangers.

Enter STEPANOFF.

Where have you been again?

Step. Out of doors.

Crus. You seem to run from one place to another, as if you were uneasy.

Step. Are you easy?

Crus. Is all quiet without?

Step. The wolves howl.

Crus. Their howl is the death-song of slavery.

Step. Perhaps it may be so—perhaps it may not.

Crus. Hope inspires me with confidence.

Step. We all hope, but hope is only a rainbow.

Crus. Is it late?

Step. Past midnight.

Crus. I am anxious respecting the Count.

Step. So am I.

Crus. Indeed!

Step. Why not? He is married, and Athanasia mine.

Crus. Does she love you?

Step. I will take her with me by force.

Crus. Will she love you for that?

Step. It is immaterial whether she will or not.

Crus. Shame on thy brutal passion!

Step. Age fancies love—youth feels it.

Crus. A noble-minded youth will never feel what an old man may not fancy.

Step. Fine words!

Crus. Which are thrown away on you.

Step. Would it were day, and every thing settled one way or the other!

Crus. The hours steal along———

Step. Very true.

Crus. Like treachery in the dark.

Step.—*(Starts.)*—What do you mean by that?

Crus. Nothing. Why does the allusion affect you thus?

Step. Because—because I am impatient.

Enter BENYOWSKY.

Crus. Ha, Benyowsky! At length you are come.

Step.—*(Aside.)*—The devil protects him.—*(Aloud.)*—Welcome!

Crus. We were uneasy.

Ben. And with justice. Suspicion and distrust have taken possession of the whole village. We must use dispatch.

Crus. All is ready.

Ben. So much the better. Kudrin had brought us to the brink of ruin by his idle prattle. But for female artifice we had been lost.

Step.—*(Aside.)*—He knows nothing, I perceive.

Crus. Where is Kudrin?

Ben. I sent him to the vessel.

Crus. There he is secure.

Ben. How are our comrades divided?

Crus. A strong party guards the haven, and another patroles through the village.

Step. The largest waits in the church, for the signal of the bell.

Crus. Those in whom we place most confidence lie here asleep.

Ben. They do right. They are collecting vigour, and will exert it. Is the bridge destroyed?

Crus. That was done in the evening.

Ben. The powder and ball——

Crus. Are properly distributed.

Ben. And the ambush at the river———

Crus. Is entrusted to Boskaref's directions.

Ben. Then we may be at ease. Stepanoff, how fare you? Are we friends?

Step. Keep your promise, and we are.

Ben. What did I promise you?

Step. The possession of Athanasia.

Ben. She alone can bestow that.

Enter a CONSPIRATOR.

Con.—(*To* Benyowsky.)—Kasarinoff wishes to see you.

Ben. At this late hour! Admit him.

[*Exit* Conspirator

Step. A stranger?

Crus. If he be aware of our preparations———

Ben. Heed not that. I am surety for him.

Enter KASARINOFF *hastily.*

Kas. Save yourself, Benyowsky.

Ben. Why?

Kas. You are betrayed. [Stepanoff *is alarmed*

Ben. By whom?

Kas. By Kudrin the Cossack.

Ben. I thank you.

Kas. Nothing more?

Ben. I already knew———

Kas. And are yet so calm?

Ben. Kudrin is in safety.

Kas. Yes—indeed he is.

Ben. In our vessel.

Kas. In prison.

Ben. What say you?

Kas. But a few minutes since he was dragged before the Governor, and came from the citadel guarded by Iwan Fedrowitsch himself. He has confessed every thing.

Ben.—*(Stamping.)*—Damnation! The blockhead suffered himself to be caught, then!

Kas. The captain will soon be here with a strong force to secure you.

Ben. Enough! We must spring the mine rather sooner than we intended.

Kas. Farewell!

Ben. Whither go you?

Kas. Home. My wife and children will be alarmed at the commotion.

Ben. Farewell, honest Kasarinoff. To-morrow you shall receive the thanks of a free man.—*(Exit* Kasarinoff.)—Double your caution. At the first signal all must be under arms.

Crus. Shall I ring the bell?

Ben. Not yet.—*(Looks at his watch.)*—Two o'clock. Would it were day!

Step. Why not proceed immediately?

Ben. That in the dark our brethren may not destroy each other.

Enter a SERVANT, *accompanied by one of the* CONSPIRATORS.

Ser. My lady sends this note.

Ben. Did she herself deliver it to you?

Ser. She herself.

Ben.—(*Opens the note, and the piece of red riband falls from it.*)—Ha! I understand this. Accept my thanks, dear girl. Thou hast fulfilled thy promise. Be this riband the emblem of our order!—(*Fastens it to his button-hole.*)—Take that fellow into custody.

Ser.—(*Affrighted.*)—Why?

Ben. Your words are false.

Ser. I am innocent.

Ben. Away with him!

Con. Come, honest friend, I'll shew you your habitation. [*Drags him out.*

Ben. Danger advances towards us with huge strides. We must no longer delay our operations. Cheer up, my comrades. The important hour is arrived. We must begin even before the dawn of day. Perhaps the morning sun will be a witness of our triumph. Rise, sluggards, rise! The voice of freedom calls to you. They sleep as if to-morrow were a holiday. Holla! Will none of you awake?—(*A drum is heard without.*)—Ha, ha! The captain, I see, takes upon himself the trouble of waking them.—(*All spring up as soon as they hear the sound of the drum, and grasp their guns.*)—Rouse yourselves, my comrades. The enemy is at the door.

All.—(*Rush towards the door.*)—We are awake. We are ready.

Ben. Halt! Order! Silence! Extinguish the lights.—(*He is obeyed.*)—Go, two of you, to that window, open it, and hold yourselves in readiness to fire. Go, two more of you, to the other window, and do the same. You, Crustiew and Stepanoff, will guard the door. Let any person in, but no one out.—(*The drums are again heard, and* Benyowsky *goes to the window.*)—What is the matter there? Who disturbs our rest?

Iwan.—(*Without.*)—Count Benyowsky, I arrest you in the name of her Imperial Majesty.

Ben. Is it you, captain? Come in, come in. An unexpected visitor is not less welcome.

Iwan. Yield! Surrender!

Ben. Allow me first to dress myself. I have just sprung out of bed, and am half naked.

Iwan. Put on your clothes, then.

Ben. Will you not come a little nearer, in the mean time?

Iwan. No.

Ben. I have a flask of good Hungarian wine, which is very comfortable in this cold weather, I assure you.

Iwan.—(*Pricking up his ears.*)—What?

Ben. Absolute nectar.

Iwan. Genuine Hungarian?

Ben. I acknowledge it as my countryman. Come in, and taste it.

Iwan. Are you alone?

Ben. Quite alone.

Iwan. Very well. I'll come, then.—(*To his Cossacks.*)—Corporal, and all of you, be on your guard. Watch at the door with drawn swords. I shall return directly.

Ben.—(*Leaving the window.*)—That is false, old blockhead. The footsteps at the lion's den point only inwards.

Enter IWAN.

(Stepanoff *and* Crustiew *seize him. He struggles, and attempts to call to his men.*

Ben.—(*Draws forth a pistol.*)—Not a syllable, or I'll shoot you on the spot.

Iwan. How! Dare you attempt———

Ben. Captain, be calm. We are on this occasion the stronger party.

Iwan. Damnation!

Ben. Deliver up your sword.

Iwan. Remember who I am.

Ben. Yes—you are our prisoner.

Iwan. No violence, I hope——

Ben. In no respect shall you be ill-treated, if you do what I require.

Iwan. What do you require?

Ben. Come to this open window, call to your Cossacks in a cheerful tone, and tell them all to enter. Say there is no danger, and they shall have a glass of brandy.

Iwan. I will not.

Ben. Then you must die.

Iwan. That is worse than the other.

Ben. Then obey my command.

Iwan. Command!

Ben. Or request, if you like that better.

Iwan. Request! Oh, that's another affair.

[*Approaches the window.*

Ben.—(*Holding the pistol before him.*)—This ball shall pass through your head, if, by a single ambiguous expression, you betray——

Iwan. Stand off, and let me manage matters.—(*Calls to the Cossacks.*)—My lads, all is quiet here. Come in, and drink.

Ben.—(*Whispering to him.*)—All.

Iwan. Come in, all of you.

Ben. Unarmed.

Iwan. Place you muskets, in the mean time, against the wall.

Cor.—(*Without.*)—Very well, captain.

Ben. Run out, brethren, seize them, and confine them in the vault. [*All the* Conspirators *rush out.*

Iwan. Do you know what this joke may cost you?

Ben. Well?

Iwan. When I use the term *joke*, I mean to imply *earnest.*

Ben. In earnest then, what may it cost me?

Iwan. The knout.

Ben. Indeed!

Iwan. Your nose and ears.

Ben. Sure!

Iwan. Let me go.

Ben. Patience!

Iwan. You are undone. Our preparations——

Ben. What are they?

Iwan. All our troops are under arms.

Ben. Indeed!

Iwan. They are advancing.

Ben. So much the better.

Iwan. With artillery.

Ben. They do us great honour.

Iwan. They will set the village on fire.

Ben. Then the fire must be extinguished.

Iwan. They will cut you to pieces.

Ben. Oh, misery!

Iwan. It will be in vain that you sue for quarter.

Ben. Just now, it is your turn to do so, Captain.

Iwan.—(*Aside.*)—Damn the fellow, and his Hungarian wine.

R-enter the CONSPIRATORS *with lights.*

Crus. All is happily adjusted.

Ben. 'Tis well. The Captain has been kind enough to inform me that the enemy is advancing with artillery.

We must prepare to receive them. Go, comrades; ring the bell.—(*The bell is heard.*)—Captain, as no officer can resign his command in such an emergency as the present, I must request you to join the Cossacks in the vault.

Iwan. What! Put me into a vault!

Ben. Fancy it a wine-vault.

Iwan. Never.

Ben.—(*Shrugging his shoulders.*)—I shall be sorry to use compulsion.

Iwan. I'll sooner be hewn in pieces.

Ben. That shall be done, if you please.

Iwan. How long am I to remain there?

Ben. Only till morning.

Iwan. Well, be it so. You see, Count Benyowsky, I undergo a great deal to oblige you. When I use the term *a great deal*, I mean to imply *the vault.*

[*Exit guarded.*

Ben. That fool is disposed of. Did none escape?

Crus. A single man, who sprung hastily back, and availed himself of the darkness.

Ben. That is unfortunate. The Governor will still learn, then———

ATHANASIA *rushes in, habited as a Cossack, with a drawn sabre in her hand.*

Athan. Benyowsky! Save yourself.

Ben.—(*Astonished.*)—Athanasia!

Athan.—(*Breathless.*)—Soldiers! On every side soldiers!

Ben. What means this disguise?

Athan. I will die with you.

Ben. Noble girl!

Athan. You are betrayed, infamously betrayed.

Ben. I know it. Kudrin———

Athan. Not Kudrin!—*(Pointing to* Stepanoff.*)*—There stands the traitor.

Ben. Who? Stepanoff?

Athan.—*(To* Stepanoff, *drawing forth his letter.)*—Do you know this letter? [Stepanoff *is confounded.*

Ben.—*(Tears the letter from her hand, and reads it.)*—Ha, villain! Dost thou know this letter?

Step. Thinkst thou I fear thee, and shall deny my hand? *I* wrote it.

Ben. Is it thus that thou makest a sport of thy oath, and the lives of thy brethren?

Step. Yes, of thy life I make a sport.

Ben.—*(Turning to the rest.)*—Treachery!

All. Down with him!

Step. As you please. Without this girl, my life is a burden to me. Let me have her, and the last drop of my blood shall flow in your defence.

Athan. Let thee have me! Cast me rather into my grave than into his arms.

Step. Damnation!—Vengeance, vengeance!—Then welcome, death.

All. Down with him!

Ben. Hold! Punish him by contempt.

Step.—*(In a phrenzy.)*—Contempt!—Me!—*(Hastily draws his sword, and aims a blow at* Benyowsky.*)*

Athan.—*(Holding him back.)*—Heavens!

(Conspirators *seize him from behind, and disarm him.*)

Step.—*(Endeavouring to suppress his fury.)*—Release me. I surrender. Benyowsky, you have conquered—She was your guardian angel—I feel penitent—forgive me—kill me———

Ben. Lead him away.

Step. Only once more, Athanasia, once more, stretch forth your soft hand as a token of forgiveness to the criminal—Let me press my lips to it———

Athan.—(Compassionately presenting her hand to him.) —Unfortunate man!—(Stepanoff *suddenly draws out a knife, and attempts to stab her.)*

Ben.—(Pushes her aside.)—Ha! Monster!

Step. That too has failed.

Ben. Now dispatch him. [*All draw their swords.*

Step. That pleasure you shall not have.—*(Plunges the knife into his breast.* Athanasia *starts back with horror, and hides her face in* Benyowsky's *bosom.)*

Ben. Madman!

Step.——*(Writhing.)*——Well aimed—Well aimed!—Curse on thee, Benyowsky! Curse——

Ben. Drag him out.

Step. Curse on Benyowsky! [*He is carried out.*

Ben. Compose yourself, dear Athanasia.

Athan.—(Trembling.)—Is he dead?

Ben. Happily for us.

Athan. Yet I pity him.

Ben. He was his own executioner.

Athan. Love——

Ben. Profane not the name.

(A discharge of muskets, &c. is heard at a distance, and gradually increases through this scene.)

Ben. What is that?

Athan. The soldiers——

Ben. Have they met already?

Crus. 'Tis well. The decisive hour is arrived.

Enter a CONSPIRATOR.

Con. We hear a discharge of muskets.
Crus. So do we.
Ben. To arms, comrades!
Crus. Ring the bell.

(From time to time the bell is heard, and is again interrupted by the noise of the muskets, &c.)

Ben. Where will you stay, Athanasia.
Athan. With you.
Ben. But the danger———
Athan. I'll share it with you.

Enter another CONSPIRATOR.

2 *Con.* The firing increases.
Ben. In what quarter?
2 *Con.* The sound seems to come up the river.
Crus. Probably Boskareff———

Enter a third CONSPIRATOR.

3 *Con.* Help! Help!
Ben. What now?
3 *Con.* The enemy is too strong for us—below in the valley——
Ben. Away! Away! Be our watch word, liberty or death. [*Rushes out.*
All.—*(Brandishing their swords.)*—Liberty or death! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE, *an Apartment in the Citadel.*

The GOVERNOR *is walking uneasily up and down.*

Gov. Not one returned as yet! What can this mean? Where is Iwan? Where are all the men whom he promised to send with accounts of his proceedings? Where is my servant? I hear shot after shot. These few men defend themselves most obstinately. Oh, Benyowsky, dreadful will be thy lot, if my vengeance be equal to thy ingratitude.

A SOLDIER *rushes in.*

Sol. I have escaped.
Gov. Where is your captain?
Sol. A prisoner.
Gov. Where is my servant?
Sol. A prisoner. They deceived the captain.
Gov. Do you know nothing more?
Sol. They are coming hither.
Gov. Who?
Sol. The rebels.
Gov. Are there many?
Sol. A multitude.
Gov. Are there any free men among them?
Sol. I believe there are.
Gov.—(*With asperity.*)—Ay, most likely, for rebellion is infectious as the plague. He who attempts to gain the hearts of the populace by kindnesses, has written his account on the surface of the sea. What means this discharge of muskets?
Sol. The carnage in the valley is dreadful.

Gov. Are our men victorious?

Sol. The reverse. They fly.

Gov. Which way?

Sol. Towards the forest.

Gov. And the artillery?

Sol. Is left behind them.

Gov. Cowardly hirelings! Go, messenger of evil. Alarm the fortress. Let every one hasten to his post.

[*Exit* Soldier.

It grows serious. Where can I leave the women.

THEODORA *rushes in.*

Theo. Oh, Heavens!

Gov. Is my daughter asleep?

Theo. She is gone.

Gov. Gone!

Theo. Escaped in mens' clothes.

Gov. Die, grey-headed father!

Theo.–(*Wringing her hands.*)–Unhappy girl that I am!

Gov. That pierced to my heart.

Theo. Why was I silent?

Gov. Aid me, ye sensations of my duty.

[*The alarm drum is heard.*

Re-enter SOLDIER *hastily.*

Sol. We are lost.

Gov. More misfortunes?

Sol. The rebels are victorious.

Gov. Where?

Sol. They are already on the bridge.

Gov. Who let the bridge down?

Sol. We thought they were Cossacks.

Gov. Bar the gate.

Sol. They have hewn it in pieces.

Gov. Without opposition?

Sol. They destroy all who oppose them.

Gov. 'Tis well. The ringleader shall not escape my vengeance. [*Rushes into an adjoining apartment.*

Theo.—(*Sinks on her knees.*)—Heaven assist us!

Re-enter GOVERNOR *armed with pistols.*

Gov. Away towards them!

Theo.—(*Throws herself on the floor, and intercepts his passage.*)—For God's sake, Sir——

Gov. What do you want?

Theo. Your life is in danger.

Gov. If my honour be lost, of what value is my life?

[*Pushes her away with his foot, and is going.*

Enter BENYOWSKY, CRUSTIEW, BATURIN, *and other* CONSPIRATORS.

(Theodora *runs away.*)

Ben. Yield.

Gov.—(*Retreats a step, and fires a pistol at* Benyowsky.)—To hell with thee!

Ben.—(*Suddenly strikes his left arm.*)—I am wounded.

Gov. Not yet dead?

[*He attempts to fire the second pistol, but is disarmed.*]

Ben. Be calm, governor.

Gov.—(*Enraged.*)—Calm!

Ben. I came hither to protect you.

Gov. Thou to protect me!

Ben. I shall not forget how much I am indebted to you.

Gov. Indeed!—Ha! Ha! Ha!

Ben. Crustiew, I deliver him into your hands.

Crus. He is the hostage for our freedom.

Ben. Let his life be sacred to you.

Crus. To me and every one.

Ben. Conduct him to his own room, and guard the door.

Crus.—(*To* Governor.)—Be so kind as to follow me.

Gov. Oh, God! Thy thunder is asleep.

[*Exit, guarded by* Crustiew, &c.

Ben. The greatest difficulty is at an end.

Bat. Thank Heaven.

Ben. And the valour of our comrades.

Bat. You said you were wounded.

Ben. I do not feel it. Go, Baturin. Let every thing we want be taken on board—ammunition, money, provisions——

Bat. They are already safely lodged in the vessel, besides a costly booty.

Ben. That you may divide among you. Where is Athanasia?

Bat. I saw her last on the stairs.

Ben. Surely she will not—— [*Going.*

ATHANASIA *rushes in.*

Athan. Where is my father?

Ben. In safety.

Athan. Dead?

Ben. Alive.

Athan. Where?

Ben. In his room.

Athan. You deceive me.

Ben. Indeed I do not.

Athan. I heard firing.

Ben. He resisted.

Athan. Heavens! you are wounded.

Ben. In a trifling degree. Be not alarmed.

Athan. I hasten to my father.

Ben. Spare him till his grief has in some degree subsided.

Athan. Who is with him?

Ben. Crustiew.

Athan. Alas! what have I done?

Enter a CONSPIRATOR *hastily.*

Con. The people are surrounding the citadel.

Ben. Are they in arms.

Con. The troops are advancing to storm it.

Ben. Away to the ramparts, then!

Con. There are but few of us. Our comrades are scattered on all sides.

Ben.—*(After a moment's meditation.)*—Drag the women, children and old men into the church. Then threaten that you will set fire to it, unless we are allowed to depart peaceably.

Con. Immediately.

Ben. Lead the Governor in chains upon the rampart, and shew him to the people. His head is surety for our safety. [*Exit* Conspirator.

Athan. Mercy!

Ben. Be not alarmed. This is but an empty threat. The people love your father.

Athan. Who does not love him?

Ben. They will tremble for his life, and let us depart unmolested.

Athan. Oh, Benyowsky, as yet it is in your power to rectify every thing. Restore yourself to me—me to my father. Release him. Open the gates. You have fought like a hero—now act like a man. You have conquered your enemies—now conquer yourself. Exchange the laurel of victory for the myrtle of love—the perils of the ocean for repose in the arms of Athanasia. Come to

my father, rid him of his chains, and receive his blessing. Your comrades will be pardoned, your own peace of mind will be restored, and I shall be supremely happy.

Ben. Athanasia, you forget I have—a wife.

Athan. Alas! I know not what I say.

Ben. The die is cast. The great wheel of fate rolls on irresistibly. Whose power can seize a spoke, and detain it?

Athan. Forgive me, Heaven. I fear I too shall be swallowed by this whirlpool.

Ben. Sister, I will keep my promise.

Re-enter CONSPIRATOR.

Con. Your plan succeeds.

Ben. Are they all quiet?

Con. They tremble at our threats, and sue for peace.

Ben. And the Governor?

Con. He addressed them from the rampart, and desired them not to spare him.

Ben. Ha!

Con. "Storm the citadel," cried he. "I command it in the name of her Imperial Majesty."

Ben. Greatly, nobly said!

Con. But in vain.

Ben. 'Tis well. Then nothing now detains us. Beat the drum, that our scattered comrades may assemble. Lead the Governor to the haven in the midst of the confederates. There he shall be released. Load your muskets and cannon. Let artillery precede and follow the procession, and let several of our comrades bear lighted matches in their hands. No further acts of hostility shall take place, but let all proceed without tumult, without shouts, or any expression likely again to rouse the fury of the populace. Go. I follow you.—(*Exit* Conspirator.)—Come, dear Athanasia.

Athan.—(*Unwilling to go.*)—Alas! this is my paternal abode.

Ben. Cast no glance towards what is past.

Athan. Here I was born—here have I felt the blessings of a mother's—of a father's love.

Ben. Do not make departure more painful than it need be.

Athan. For the last time———

Ben. You are still at liberty to stay.

Athan. Never, never again shall I behold this seat of all my youthful pleasures. Never again shall I hear the mild voice of my father.

Ben. You torment yourself and me.

Athan. Forgive me. [*The drum is heard.*

Ben. The moments are precious.

Athan.—(*Suppressing her anguish.*)—I am ready.

Ben. Beloved Athanasia, to part with you would be horrible, yet the choice is left to you. Stay, or go.

Athan. Stay!—Oh, my father!—Beat the drum again and again, that the noise may overpower my voice.—Away! Away! Lead me away.

Ben. Lean on your brother's arm.

Athan.—(*Looking once more mournfully around.*)—Blessings be on my aged father. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to a Part of the Haven. The Vessel is ready to sail. The Crew is diligently employed, and* CONSPIRATORS *are running to and fro. A confused Noise is heard on every Side.*

Heave the anchor.—Unfurl all the sails.—The wind is North East by East. Pilot!—There they come—The whole party is crowding down the hill.—Luck be with us!—All is ready.—Huzza! Huzza!

Enter BENYOWSKY, ATHANASIA, CRUSTIEW, *and the rest of the* CONSPIRATORS. *The* GOVERNOR, *exhausted with fury, is conducted in chains by a strong guard.* CRUSTIEW *and the* CONSPIRATORS *run up and down the deck of the vessel, making preparations, and giving orders.* BENYOWSKY *approaches the* GOVERNOR, *while* ATHANASIA *fearfully remains at a distance.*

Ben. But few moments are in my power. Do we part as friends?—(Governor *casts a look of contempt at him, turns away, and gnashes his teeth.)*—Was it a crime that I was made a prisoner when fighting against Russians? Is it a crime that I this day break my cruel fetters?—(Governor *is obstinately silent.)*—Honour, and the love of my native country, led me to take this step. An oath bound my fate to that of my comrades.—(Governor *returns no answer.)*—I left a pregnant wife at home. Old man, what would you have done in my situation?—(Governor *preserves a sullen silence.)*—Am I unworthy of a word or look? Enough! What anguish and rage now condemn, your cooler blood will palliate to-morrow.—Farewell!—(Governor, *enraged beyond all bounds, grasps his chains, and is rushing towards* Benyowsky, *but is held back. He espies* Athanasia, *strikes his forehead with both hands, and utters loud lamentations.*)

Athan.—*(Runs to him, and falls at his feet.)*—Pardon me, my father.

Gov.—*(With averted face.)*—Who speaks to me?

Athan. Your blessing!

Gov. My curse pursue thee across the ocean! Hear it when the tempest rages—hear it in the arms of thy paramour. Tremble at it, when the lightnings hiss around thee; and when the sun shines, think with horror that it shines upon the grave of thy murdered father—murdered

by thee. When the thunder roars, mayst thou fancy that thou hearest my curse; and when a gentle zephyr breathes upon thee, mayst thou fancy it my dying groan. May all forsake thee at thy last hour, except the image of thy raging father, made more ghastly, and more horrible, by thy feverish fancy. Shouldst thou bear children, be the curse of their grandfather their inheritance, and may their ingratitude revenge me on their mother.—(Athanasia *sinks speechless, and almost senseless, into* Benyowsky's *arms. The* Governor *is deeply affected.)*—Remain with me, my child. My poor deluded child, remain with me. I am old and feeble. When your mother died, she said, "Do not weep—I leave you Athanasia." Will you make the words of your dying mother false? In a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, (how soon will they pass!) I shall leave this world, and you will be able to say, "I have fulfilled the command of my mother—I have closed my father's eyes."

Ben.—(Much agitated.)—Spare her.

Gov. Thou art my only joy, my only consolation. I love thee with a father's tenderness. No paramour will love thee with such fondness. Cloyed by possession, he will repay thy affection with disgust, while thy aged father requires no further reward for his blessing, than the gentle pressure of thy hand upon his eyelids when they wish to close for ever.—Oh, that my hair were not already grey, for at this moment it would become so, and such a sight perhaps might move thee.—(Athanasia *attempts to rise, and falls back in a swoon.)*

Ben.—(Deeply affected.)—Heavens!—Help!—Take her.—Bear her away.

Gov.—(Overpowered with anguish.)—Count Benyowsky, if thou hast any faith in a God, listen to me. I have never injured thee. I have been as kind towards thee as I could. Thou hast robbed me of my rank and

honour. Leave me my daughter, and I still am rich. Count Benyowsky, if thou hast any faith in a God, listen to me. Oh, listen to me for the sake of thy wife, who prays for thy return. How can Heaven grant her prayer, if thou robbest me, a poor old man, of my only jewel? Listen to me, and grant my request for *thy* child's sake. What wouldst thou do with *mine?* See! She is already dead. Give me, give me the body of my daughter.—*(Falls on his knees, and raises his trembling hands towards Heaven.)*—Count Benyowsky—I have no words—I have no tears—but God has lightnings.

Ben.—*(Is extremely agitated, and lays* Athanasia *still insensible in the arms of her father.)*—Take her, old man.—*(Draws out the picture of his wife.)*—Emilia! My wife!—To the vessel instantly!—(*A confused noise takes place, and all hasten on board.*)

Gov.—(*Pressing his daughter to his bosom with his left hand, while he stretches forth the other towards the vessel.*)—God bless thee, stranger. God bless thee!

THE END.

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